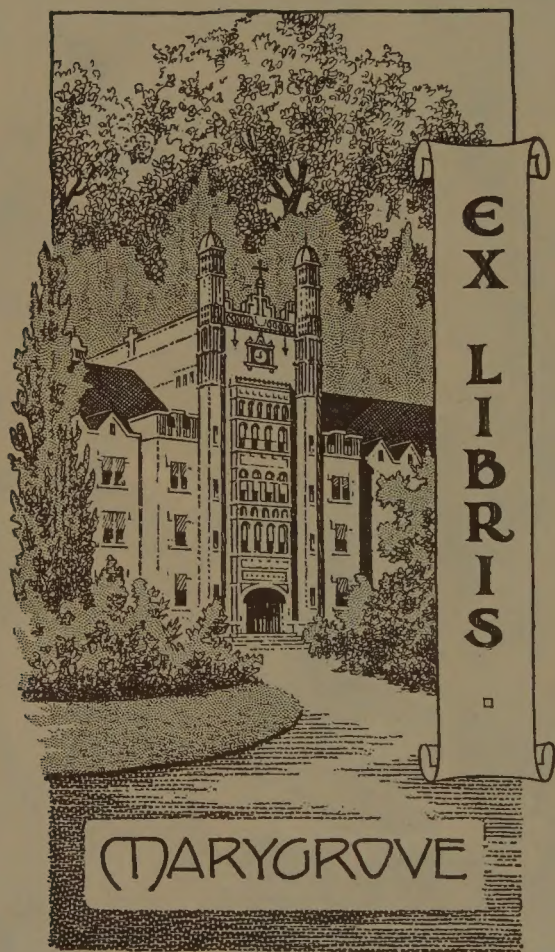


MEMOIRS  
OF  
Mother Mary Aquinata













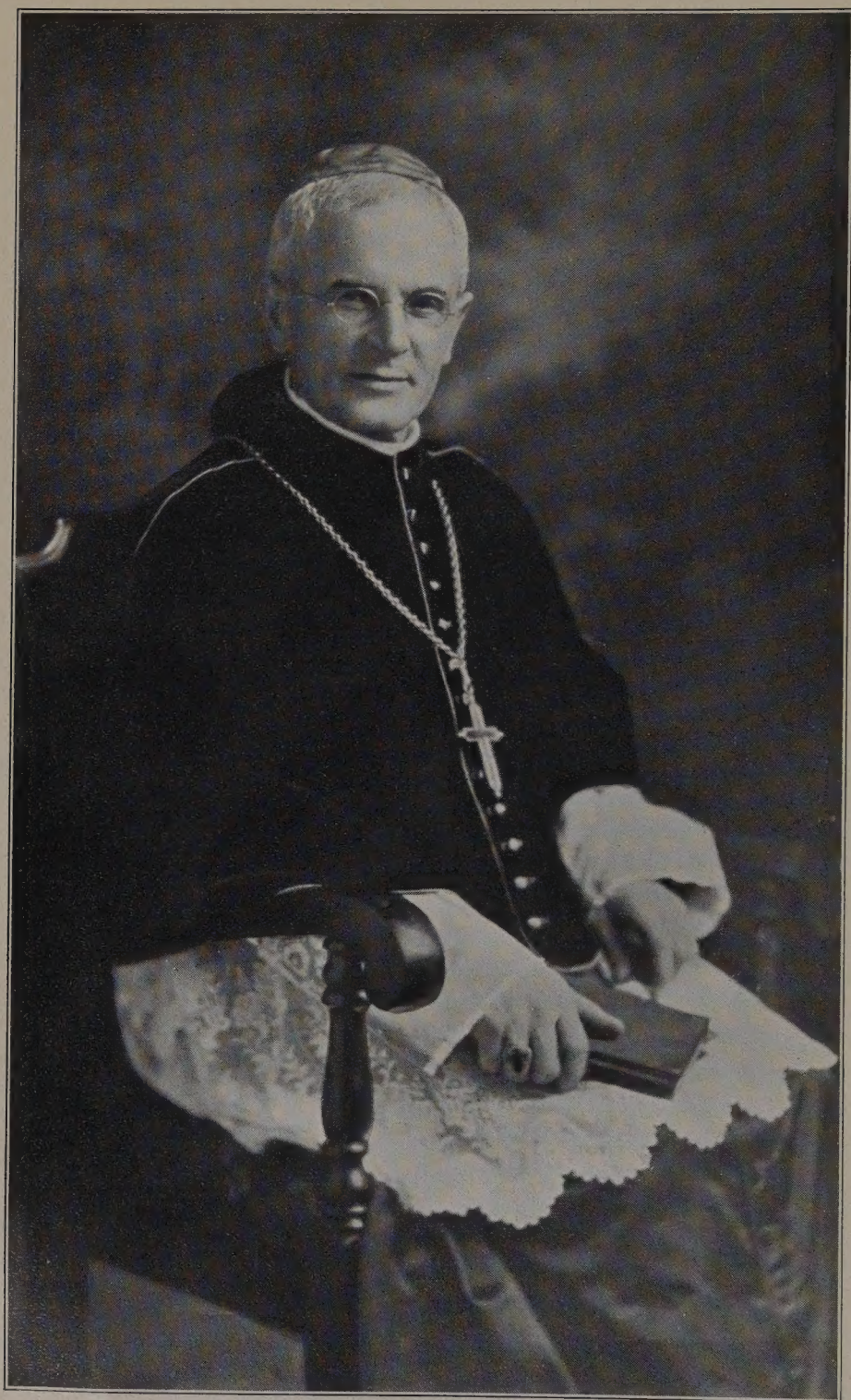












THE RIGHT REVEREND JOSEPH GABRIEL PINTEN, D.D.  
Bishop of Grand Rapids, Michigan









Memoirs of Mother Mary  
Aquinata Fiegler, O. P.  
~ 1848-1915 ~

NIHIL OBSTAT:

ANTONIUS VOLKERT, D.D.

*Censor Librorum*

Grandormii, die 24 Februarii, 1928

IMPRIMATUR:

✠JOSEPH GABRIEL PINTEN, D.D.

*Episcopus Grandormensis*

Grandormii, die Februarii, 1928







MOTHER MARY AQUINATA FIEGLER  
Picture Taken on Occasion of Her Golden Jubilee, 1914



MEMOIRS  
*of*  
Mother Mary Aquinata  
Fiegler, O. P.

First Mother General of the  
Dominican Sisters in Grand  
Rapids, Michigan, Congrega-  
tion of our Lady of the Sacred  
Heart

*by*  
SISTER MARY PHILOMENA KILDEE, O.P.,

*of the*  
Dominican Sisters  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

THE JAMES BAYNE COMPANY  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

1928

Copyright, 1928

*By*

THE JAMES BAYNE COMPANY  
GRAND RAPIDS  
MICHIGAN

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

4/5/29



To our  
*Pioneer Sisters,*  
true Apostles of the Faith,  
who with  
Christ-like zeal,  
undaunted courage,  
and heroic sacrifice,  
brought the  
*Daughters of St. Dominic*  
to the  
“*fair Peninsula of the West,*”  
these *Memoirs*  
are lovingly and gratefully  
*dedicated.*





# CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Introduction . . . . .	xv
Foreword . . . . .	xxi

## PART ONE

### LIFE BEFORE ENTERING RELIGION

<i>One</i>	Birthplace . . . . .	1
<i>Two</i>	Childhood and Youth . . . . .	5
<i>Three</i>	Echoes From the Cloisters of Ratisbon . . . . .	13

## PART TWO

### RELIGIOUS LIFE AND ACTIVITIES IN THE EAST

<i>Four</i>	Religious Vocation . . . . .	17
<i>Five</i>	Early Mission Life . . . . .	23
<i>Six</i>	Opening of New Mission in Jersey City . . . . .	29

## PART THREE

### RELIGIOUS LIFE AND ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST

<i>Seven</i>	Scene of First Dominican Activities in the West— Traverse City, Michigan . . . . .	35
<i>Eight</i>	New Missions Opened . . . . .	41
<i>Nine</i>	Holy Angels Convent Becomes Provincialate and Novitiate . . . . .	49
<i>Ten</i>	New Responsibilities Assumed—Care of Orphans . . . . .	57
<i>Eleven</i>	Mother Aquinata, First Mother General of a Diocesan Congregation . . . . .	67
<i>Twelve</i>	Growth of the Community . . . . .	79
<i>Thirteen</i>	Mother Aquinata as Religious, Superior, Educator . . . . .	89
<i>Fourteen</i>	Golden Rosary of Years . . . . .	101
<i>Fifteen</i>	Close of a Well-Spent Life . . . . .	107
	A Glimpse Beyond . . . . .	119
	Bibliography . . . . .	121
	Index . . . . .	125



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Right Reverend Joseph Gabriel Pinten, D.D.,  
Bishop of Grand Rapids, Michigan

Mother Mary Aquinata Fiegler, O.P. Picture taken on  
Occasion of Her Golden Jubilee, 1914 . . . Frontispiece

	Facing Page
Old and New Worbis	
Birthplace of Mother Aquinata . . . . .	2
Mother Mary Boniface, O.P.	
Cousin of Mother Aquinata. Only Surviving member of the Pioneer Band . . . . .	6
St. Thomas, the Eucharistic Doctor	
Mother's Patron Saint . . . . .	22
St. Dominic Convent, Jersey City, New Jersey	
Built in 1878 . . . . .	30
The Right Reverend Ignatius Mrak, D.D.	
The Reverend George Ziegler . . . . .	34
Mother Mary Gonsalva, O.P.	
Second Mother General . . . . .	40
Holy Angels Convent, Traverse City, Michigan	
Cradle of Dominican Sisters in Michigan . . . . .	48
St. John Home, Grand Rapids, Michigan	
Temporary Motherhouse (1889-1922) . . . . .	56
The Late Right Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, D.D. (1883-1916)	
First Bishop of Grand Rapids, Michigan . . . . .	76



	Facing Page
Old Sacred Heart Academy, Grand Rapids, Michigan . . . .	84
Holy Rosary Academy, Bay City, Michigan . . . . .	
The Motherhouse, Sacred Heart College and Academy, Mary- wood, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mother's Dream . . . .	88
Letter in Mother's Handwriting . . . . .	92
"A Peninsula dotted white with Dominican Foundations" . . .	94
The Right Reverend Michael James Gallagher, D.D. Bishop of Detroit, Michigan . . . . .	98
The Late Right Reverend Edward Dionysius Kelly, D.D. Bishop of Grand Rapids (1919-1926) . . . . .	114

Memoirs of Mother Mary  
Aquinata Fiegler, O. P.

~ 1848-1915 ~





## INTRODUCTION

WHEN, in the month of July, we were conducting a retreat for the Carmelite Nuns in Carmel-by-the-Sea, a lovely spot on the beautiful Pacific coast, we received an invitation from Sister Mary Philomena, O. P., to introduce her literary work, the *Memoirs of Mother Mary Aquinata*, to the public. We accepted the invitation cheerfully, realizing that all those who learn to know the beautiful soul of this valiant woman consecrated to God—so clearly, tenderly, and elegantly depicted in these pages—will love her and close the book feeling better and happier.

“Tolle, lege” . . . . . “Take the book, and read,” said or sang a playful child centuries ago. Nearby, Augustine, the great orator and philosopher, weeping and struggling within himself, lay prostrate beneath a tree. He feared to give up the broadway of passion which he hated, yet he dreaded to follow the narrow way of the cross which he loved. Augustine, hearing the voice of the child, took the book—the Holy Bible—opened it at random and read: “Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness; not in contention and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in its concupiscence.” The reading of these inspired words turned the soul of the sinner to

God and transformed the sinful pagan into a saint, and the greatest Doctor of the Church.

Take and read the *Memoirs of Mother Mary Aquinata*. It is the history of a soul that read and studied the Holy Gospels, accepted the evangelical counsels, walked honestly in the day, and gradually did put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and lived according to the religious Rule of Life given by St. Augustine. It is not a "love story" in the ordinary sense of the word; but it is a story of love—pure, holy, strong as death; the story of an innocent, tender, ardent heart that sought the love of God in the silence and solitude of the convent; that penetrated deeper and deeper into the mysteries of this love of God by praying, meditating, and performing acts of penance and self-sacrificing charity. It is a story of a loving soul told with filial affection, historic truthfulness, and academic elegance by a Sister, who in her young girlhood came under the strong influence of this spiritual Mother, and was formed and trained by her. It is a story of love and it is a work of love.

We ask the kind reader to look attentively at the picture of Mother Aquinata given as a frontispiece, and to note the historic Dominican habit. Mother Aquinata was a Sister of St. Dominic. The Latin for Dominic, "Dominicus," means the man of the Lord, the man like unto the Lord. St. Dominic was a "Flaming Torch," a "Light of the Church," a "Doctor of Truth," a "Rose of Patience." He gave to the Church the holy rosary, and an Order of

Preaching Friars; cloistered, praying nuns; and teaching Sisters. He was a powerful master of the spiritual life. He could stir youthful hearts, draw them to himself, give them his holy habit, lead them to the Lord, form Christ in them, and lift them up to God. Many men and women who were under his direction are canonized saints. One of these saints, Blessed Cecilia, who had received the habit from his holy hands at the age of seventeen in the city of Rome, helped later to found a convent in the city of Bologna, and probably one in Ratisbon, Bavaria. In that Holy Cross Convent of Ratisbon, as the Memoirs tell us, the holy habit passed from hand to hand, from generation to generation for seven hundred years, its members growing constantly in sanctity. In the nineteenth century, a member of that community brought the venerable habit to our country; and here it was placed on the shoulders of Appolonia Fiegler, who, urged by the love of God and the love of souls, the apostolic zeal of the apostolic Dominic, brought it to the state of Michigan; and, to the best of our knowledge, gave it to more candidates, kneeling and praying, than any of her predecessors.

In this picture of a Sister wearing the habit of St. Dominic and holding his rosary and Constitutions in her hand, notice the name, *Sister Mary Aquinata, O. S. D.* It was written thus in her innocent, gentle, firm hand. "Aquinata" stands for St. Thomas of Aquin. St. Thomas was born only a few



years after the death of St. Dominic. He became the "Light and Glory of the Order of St. Dominic," and the "Angelic, Eucharistic Doctor of the Church." This illustrious name of the "Angel of the Schools," of "the White Poet of the Eucharist," Mother received with the habit of St. Dominic and the Rule of St. Augustine. Mother was an "Aquinata" in name and in deed. Like her holy model and patron, St. Thomas, she prayed and studied, loved Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, she worked zealously to make Him better known. Her soul lived on that "Bread of Life," and she sang without ceasing, the "Tantum Ergo," the "O Salutaris Hostia," the "Lauda Sion," the "Adoro Te, Devote"—the sweet Eucharistic hymns of her patron. Mother Aquinata, like St. Thomas Aquinas, harmonized perfectly a life of prayer with a life of teaching. She thus became to her pupils and her Sisters a sun that spread rays of warmth as well as rays of light.

Contemplating the countenance of Mother Aquinata, the reader will detect at once a soul, silent and deep, sweet and serious, tender and firm. However, for a better and a fuller understanding of the virtues of this consecrated soul, we must read the pages written for us by a sister soul, enlightened, scholarly, and above all sympathetic. "Take the book, and read." And when you have read this story of a religious who loved God and loved her neighbor, honor her by imitating her. To love God is one of

the precepts of the Lord, the greatest desire of the heart, the "water of life" that springs up into life everlasting. If while reading this story, more beautiful and interesting than fiction, you hear the voice of God calling, you feel the spirit drawing, youthful reader, fear not to imitate Mother Aquinata. Enter the convent to live the life and to do the work of love. The life of work, of love, is always full of joy and consolation.

The life of Mother Aquinata is interesting, edifying, but not unique. Other Sisters have had providential missions, have excelled in being good, and in doing good. We have had a Mother Pia, a Mother Emily, a Mother Augustine Neuhierl, a Mother Hyacinth, a Mother Camilla, a Mother Augustine Fleck, and a Mother Alphonsa Hawthorne. Other Orders and Congregations have had their saintly and successful founders. The light of their lives remains hidden. Imitate Sister Mary Philomena and publish their histories, that the light of their lives may shine in the House of God; that all seeing it may praise the Father who is in Heaven.

*C. M. Shucette, O.P.,*

*Fest of the Assumption.*  
*1924.*



## FOREWORD

**M**ORE than thirty years ago, a nation, comparatively young as the life of nations counts, set out to commemorate fitly the coming of the great discoverer, Columbus of heroic and Catholic memory. Still fresh in many minds are recollections of the wonderful Columbian Fair that sprang into glorious existence beside the storied Lake whose wide expanse is, of itself, representative of the spaciousness and beauty of the new land.

Fittingly enough, notwithstanding centuries of change and hindrance looming darkly between that far-off day of discovery and these of achievement, no features of the anniversary celebration were more markedly successful than those contributed by Mother Church to whom Columbus gave his lifelong allegiance.

Among crowding incidents which might be adduced as proof (in hackneyed phrase they are far too numerous to repeat) one comes to mind of peculiar significance in connection with our present purpose: the purpose being to preserve as well as may be, the record of one more of the hidden lives that are the true glory of Catholicity.

As part of the literary exercises of Woman's Day at the Columbian Fair, contributions in the form of



papers, poems, and recitations were requested of women writers expected to attend; the subjects were assigned by the very competent committee in charge. One such assignment was a poem under the descriptive title: "*Woman, the Inspirer of Great Deeds*," and the writer chosen, who devoted to her task much of research and unbiased selection, found as the leading figures in her list of "Woman Inspirers," devoted daughters of the Church who, through years of selfless effort, had sought to remain unknown and unnoticed "behind the shield of vow and convent veil."

What a wondrous galaxy they are—the Catherines of Siena, Alexandria, and Bologna; Agnes of Tuscany, Theresa of Castile, Bridget of Sweden, Ita of Erin, Rose of Lima! These are but a very few of the women of the cloister, records of whose lives are still, as has been said by a great preacher and litterateur of today, "more deeply fascinating than any novel, while in truthfulness belonging to a literature second only to the Bible."

Knowing, then, the inspiration to be found in such pages, it is without doubt eminently desirable that every age and every land contribute its quota, duly approved and certified, to the list. Therefore, on the lengthening page where the names of Catherine of Siena, Agnes of Tuscany and Rose of Lima shine forth with the symbolic star and lily of their Founder Father, St. Dominic, beside them, place may well be sought for yet another of his daughters

who toiled and strove in the land of her adoption, always in the selfsame spirit voiced by the dear Saint Catherine in her deathbed utterance: "Not for vain glory, but the Glory of God."



# **PART ONE**

## **LIFE BEFORE ENTERING RELIGION**





# MEMOIRS

*of*

Mother Mary Aquinata  
Fiegler, O. P.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BIRTHPLACE

**F**OR the earliest phases of this consecrated life, the life of her who was born Appolonia Fiegler, we turn to her birthplace in the quiet valley of Eichsfeld, situated almost in the heart of Germany. And as early environment is ever considered a factor in spiritual as well as physical development, one likes to linger a little over particulars culled here and there regarding this favored region.

It is described as a valley sixty miles in length, enclosed by the wooded hills known as the Thüringer Wald, and by the Hartz Mountains. Far removed from the great cities and the modish resorts, it might be considered at first glance, poor and uninteresting, but tourists with a true sense of the beautiful who recall the undulating fields, the picturesque hills and rugged mountains, showing here

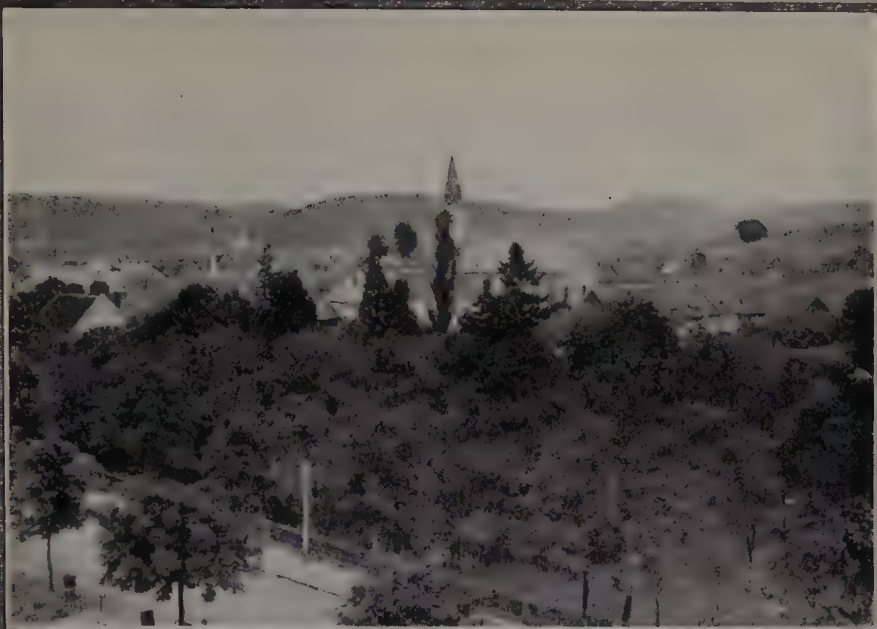
and there a sheer abyss that startles the stranger, know that Mother Nature has dowered this secluded tract with rarest bounty.<sup>1</sup> Much of the grandeur and sublimity which tourists are led to consider as the attributes only of the much bewritten Alps, are here; and here also, that reposeful atmosphere sought in nearby health resorts that have been advertised into celebrity.<sup>2</sup>

The origin of the name, Eichsfeld (oak field), is not definitely known. Perhaps it dates as far back as the days when the people worshipped in groves of oak, before the great St. Boniface taught them the knowledge and love of the true God. We know that as a solitary and friendless missionary, Boniface traversed this region, "the land of his German ancestry," after he had received from Pope Gregory at Rome permission to seek the conversion and civilization of the German people. And still familiar are the legends of his passing—of miraculous refreshment provided for him in lonely forests through which he made his pathless way; of his daring when, passing amid a famous oak grove, he hewed down without assistance the stateliest oak of all, because it had been dedicated by the Druids to their god, the mighty Thor. Boniface knew that its fall at the hands of an unarmed stranger would go far towards shattering the super-

---

<sup>1</sup> George Lippold, *Ein Naturdenkmal im Ohmgebirge*, p. 28. *Mein Eichsfeld, Heimat-Jahrbuch—1925*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 30.



NEW WORBIS



OLD WORBIS 1845

Birthplace of Mother Aquinata.





stitious belief of the people in the power of its titular deity.

Passing today through the storied valley, we find among the oaks many a wayside shrine to greet us; sometimes beneath the shade of evergreens, a crucifix with only a roof above and a rustic kneeling bench before, incites the faithful soul to a spell of quiet communion with her Creator. Sometimes, in a natural niche in the mountain, a statue of Our Lady comes to view, reminding us that she is ever near, surrounding us with a mother's love and care.

But the true pilgrim's shrine, familiar and dear to the heart of every citizen of Eichsfeld, is the "Hül-fensberg" or Mountain of Help. With this hill the people connect the earliest knowledge of Christian faith that blest their forefathers; and in the Pilgrim's Church of Our Divine Redeemer, they pray for assistance in every spiritual and temporal need.<sup>3</sup> True, indeed, are the words of Dr. Iseke, the poet of Eichsfeld:

"While the Hül-fensberg is honored  
And pilgrims seek its sacred shrine,  
The fame and faith of Eichsfeld  
Will never know decline."<sup>4</sup>

At the Northern border of Eichsfeld, where the Hartz Mountains and Thüringer Wald form a nat-

---

<sup>3</sup> J. Seeboth, *Der Hül-fensberg*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

ural gateway to the valley, lies the little city of Worbis, the real starting point of our story.

In the Worbis of the nineteenth century, we find credited about two thousand inhabitants. This is the new Worbis, the seat of various state and government offices, a forestry department, schools that are more than locally famous—as for instance, a winter school of agriculture, a school for house-keeping (now it should be called domestic science), a well-equipped hospital, and such other accessories as gas works and various industrial plants. And mentioned last, because most important, are the church and convent buildings whose tall spires overtop the trees that line every street and highway, and form the connecting link between the new and the old Worbis, for such are the city divisions.

In old Worbis, the antiquary and the cultured traveler are fain to linger. Here in the fourteenth century—1311 is the exact date—the Cistercians erected a wonderful cloister; in 1677, other pious monks took up their abode in Worbis, and of both buildings there still remain relics of remarkable beauty; a chancel dating from 1777, some magnificent frescoes, and rare specimens of stained glass work are among the treasures of Worbis, the old and venerated.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Sommerfrische Worbis, p. 10, 11.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

SUCH were the surroundings, such the inspirational environment into which was born the child to be known as Appolonia Fiegler for a few brief years, and through later ones of saintly effort, as Mother Mary Aquinata of Saint Dominic.

“Born in Worbis, Eichsfeld, Province of Saxony, Germany, on August 16, 1848; father’s name, Aloys Fiegler; mother’s name, Johanna Florentina Iffland.”

So run the commonplace notes of an event that had no distinguishing features among numerous official records of their kind. From other sources, where the intimate details of home happenings are faithfully preserved, we learn something of the family circle honored without its knowing by the advent of this predestined daughter.

Evidently, it was a family circle such as was the recognized order of simpler and more satisfying days than these progressive ones of ours; when Catholic households such as that of Aloys and Johanna Fiegler cherished the beautiful traditions of one little home at Nazareth, and yielded patriarchal place to the elders of their own family. Consequently, it is noted as of special significance, in



the home annals of the little Appolonia, that her grandparents were considered highly educated, and also particularly known as God-fearing people. The grandfather had served with distinction in the army of his country (Prussia), and probably carried into domestic life the belief in discipline which, when wisely exercised, is a most beneficial adjunct of early training. Of the grandmother it is mentioned that she died comparatively young, but evidently Appolonia's mother was fully qualified for her God-given task of exemplar and guide for the little ones bestowed of the Lord.

Deeply religious, her first thought from their earliest days was to train her children, Appolonia and a brother, Arnold, two years her senior, in the ways of piety and obedience. In this she was supported and strengthened by her husband, a man of character and unusual executive ability, obliged no doubt, by the necessity of supporting his home, to give the greater portion of his time to the demands of his business as a printer.

For her children, the good mother's first ambition was education, not only secular but thoroughly Christian as well. As one means to this end, they were sent to school at an early age; for the first few years to the People's school because that conducted by the Catholic Sisters was too far away from the Fiegler home.

It is interesting to learn that even then, on the threshold of the educational years, one of Appo-



MOTHER MARY BONIFACE, O.P.  
Cousin of Mother Aquinata. Only Surviving Member of the  
Pioneer Band.



lonia's teachers, Miss Stricker, was heard to remark frequently, "Our little Appolonia will be a leader some day." How interesting it would be were it only possible to ascertain whether the kindly teacher ever heard even the opening chapters of her pupil's life story in the new land of her adoption.

At this early stage is also noted the difference between the children, which must have been even then a grief to the mother's heart, for Arnold, while only a few years his sister's senior, as has been said, showed evidence of an adventurous and unruly disposition, which later on caused sad worry to parents and sister.

A great event of childhood it was when Appolonia was considered old and strong enough to venture daily on the long walk to the "Sisters' School" where the warmest welcome awaited the eager little scholar.

Sister teachers did not differ much in those days from our own (the date must have been 1856 or 1857), and perfectly natural it sounds to hear from one who had the story of those school days at first hand, how the Sisters decided on very short acquaintance that Appolonia was, indeed, a most remarkable child.

She was exceptionally talented in many lines; in several, her ability was considered little short of wonderful, and as an addition not always possible in such connection, it is noted that she was equally beloved by teachers and classmates. While her

ability was acknowledged by all and her help frequently sought for by others who had neither her talent nor her application, Appolonia never showed a sense of superiority. The pleasure of helping others was, without doubt, the only sensation she experienced.

About this time the following was written by one of Appolonia's Sister teachers to her mother: "Your little daughter is most remarkable. She is an example of diligence, obedience, self-control, piety. God surely must have something good in store for her."

Thus from earliest childhood were manifested the selfsame characteristics and virtues which showed so strongly in later life and elicited the following comments from prominent clerics, "Mother Aquinata is a woman in a thousand." "When the history of Michigan is written, Mother Aquinata's name should stand in "Letters of Gold."

Turning again to the home, we find that business conditions were such in Germany that Appolonia's father found it well-nigh impossible to make a livelihood for his family there. Wherefore, after mature deliberation, he took his only son, Arnold, a boy of barely thirteen years, and left for America where, by common report, there was prospect of a successful business career.

In this land of opportunity, he hoped to do great things—send immediate help to his wife and family across the sea, and a little later when all was in a



flourishing condition, have them come to join him.

During this enforced absence of the husband and father, Mrs. Fiegler took up her abode with her own sister, Mrs. A. Hartleb, the widowed mother of three young daughters: Wilhelmina, Anna, and Bertha. Of these the first named came to be later known as Mother Boniface of the Dominican Order, and is still living.

In order to support this combined household of six, both mothers engaged in mail service, leaving many domestic duties and children's care to Appolonia who, herself, could have scarcely numbered eleven years. However she was, as we know, exceptional in many respects. We may well believe the wonderful maternal instinct, of which instances still show among the "little mothers" of crowded sections in our own great cities, belonged in unusual measure to this predestined spiritual mother of future years.

The grandfather, now aged and probably more of a burden than a help, was generally in the home during the hours when the busy mothers were away, and was supposed to act as guardian and adviser. The school-girl grandchild proved fully equal to her grown-up responsibilities. Besides attending her classes regularly herself, she supervised most efficiently the education of the younger children, gathering them around her in the evenings for their school work in which she helped them with perfect ease and correctness; instructing them

in Catechism and all the practices of piety which the Sisters had taught her, and which she induced the little ones to share.

No business detail of the home, committed to her charge, was ever neglected. Yet without drain on its slender resources, the child housekeeper managed to help many of the needy who came her way, giving to them whatever she could deny herself of material things, and always adding to their happiness by her interest and cheer.

For all the efforts of the courageous family there were, as may be easily imagined, much of hardship and trial encountered during the years which elapsed between the departure of the father and son for America and the day which brought a welcome summons for the American reunion so longed-for by mother and daughter.

It was during these years of vigil that the great day of First Holy Communion came to Appolonia. Her cousin, Mother Boniface, who recalls the ecstatic joy of the child on the occasion and for days previous when she could scarcely eat or sleep because of its expectation, cannot fix with certitude the exact date, believing however, that it may have been on the Feast of St. Hyacinth which was the little mother's birthday, August the sixteenth, or perhaps the wonderful Assumption Day of that Blessed Lady to whom Appolonia was always tenderly devoted.

No childish pleasure in merrymaking had ever

for her the attraction of the yearly pilgrimages made in our Lady's honor to the hallowed shrines within and around the city of her birth on the feast-days of the Queen of Angels, so wondrously observed in Cathedral and cloister.

Thus did environment seem to strengthen the ardor of that soul which ever aspired to heavenly things. After entering religion she was often heard to say, "I owe to our Blessed Lady my vocation to the great Order of St. Dominic." The features of her home-land ever present to her mind were the pilgrimages and special devotions that were as garlands of remembrance laid at the feet of Mary by loyal servants in the storied valley of Eichsfeld, which she was never to see again after the departure with her mother for America.

As this departure marks the close of her days in the beloved birthland, some incidents more clearly connected there than with other phases of her life may be mentioned here. The "only brother," dear beyond question to this sister's heart, after a stay of some years with his father in whose company he had come to America, served in the Civil War and survived the experience; but a few years later, with the wander-lust upon him which was noticed as a characteristic of his even in childhood, started on a voyage for Brazil and was lost on shipboard. This happening must have saddened sorely the years of exile for his parents.

They, within three years from the time when

their daughter heard the Divine call that summoned her from their home, returned to Germany and there, ten years later, the father died. This was about the date when Mother Aquinata opened the new mission in Traverse City, Michigan, so we may infer that it was given to this Catholic father to know and rejoice in the proofs of his daughter's executive ability, her inheritance from him, trebly enhanced by the fact of its being with her entirely dedicated to the honor and glory of God.

In 1889, the yearnings of a mother's heart for the one daughter grown upward but not away, brought Mrs. Fiegler again to America, this time to Traverse City, Michigan. Here she stayed for a few years and then returned to her own country where she died in June, 1897.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ECHOES FROM THE CLOISTERS OF RATISBON

**A**MONG the glorious traditions of her homeland, the inalienable heritage of the little maid who, at the welcome summons of an exiled father, started hopefully for foreign shores, none could have been more dear and precious than those woven with the history of Ratisbon of Bavaria, the Province that neighbored her native Saxony.

Rich in imperishable memories of dauntless clerics and heroic saints is Ratisbon whose earliest chronicles must stir the enthusiasm of any Christian scholar. Inseparably associated with its story is the name of Albertus Magnus, under whose tutelage the talents of St. Thomas Aquinas were developed.<sup>1</sup> And of more importance still to the Fiegler household, tending in their home environment the glorious torch of an inherited faith, is the knowledge that despite centuries of persecution and hindrance, Ratisbon is still dominantly Catholic.

To the child Appolonia, who, as we have heard, from her earliest childhood shared wherever possible in the pious exercises of her own circle and rejoiced in the stories of pilgrimages and missions

---

<sup>1</sup> Christine Sevier, *From Ratisbon Cloisters*, p. 17.



beyond, the latest chapter of Ratisbon's record, then only very recent, must have been familiar.

It may be that her young eyes had never seen that far-famed cloister, the Dominican Convent of the Holy Cross at Ratisbon (built in 1237 when St. Dominic's own early course had just finished), yet with this memoried shrine Divine Providence had ordained that her life story should be closely associated. This was the starting point whence, a few years previously, when Appolonia was the precocious baby scholar of a People's school at Worbis, a volunteer quartette of Dominic's dedicated daughters<sup>2</sup> set forth on the self-same route that was later taken by Appolonia Fiegler, with the same port of the New World—New York—for destination.

The year was 1853. The twenty-sixth of August saw their arrival in the strange land, obeying a call that had resounded years before through their quiet cloister home when a distinguished Bavarian missionary (Reverend Boniface Wimmer, a Benedictine Abbot from St. Vincent's, Beatty, Pennsylvania), had told with pathetic eloquence of the pitiable need for Catholic education among the little children of America where he had early cast his lot.

Thus from the Convent at Ratisbon came the spiritual seed destined to yield fruit from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, and hence it is that the

---

<sup>2</sup> Sisters Josepha Witzelhofer, Augustine Neuhierl, Franziska Roetter, and Jacobina Riederer.  
P. Hieronymus Wilms, O. P., *Geschichte der deutschen Dominikanerinnen*, p. 379.

thousands who have since embraced the Dominican Constitutions on American soil, claim as their Alma Mater that venerable pile which centuries since owed its erection to the pious Count Henry of Ortenburg.

Undisputed place as the eldest daughter of that wondrous Ratisbon belongs now to the Mother-house in Brooklyn, known as the Convent of the Holy Cross, which was dedicated by Bishop Loughlin of blessed memory, in November, 1857, the ceremonies being witnessed by the six Sisters who then comprised the entire strength of the Community. The name must ever serve to recall that hallowed home from whence its founders came, having as their only treasure a precious relic of the True Cross, given them on the eve of their departure by Bishop Riedel at Ratisbon when he came to bless their venture and supply them with letters of commendation and introduction.<sup>3</sup>

Between that day of departure and the day of dedication which saw the consummation of valiant effort, months and years had elapsed, sown thickly with trials and disappointments such as ever marked the road of the Cross Bearers.

Few and simple as "annals of the poor" are the records of those years wherein dark days, depressing and despondent hours, show sadly numerous. Yet even through these there glance redeeming rays; such for instance was the welcome accorded

---

<sup>3</sup> Christine Sevier, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

the unexpected pilgrim Sisters of '53 by the Redemptorist Fathers of New York, worthy sons of St. Alphonsus, whose kindness to the dear foundress remains forever a bright spot in the history of the foundation; such was the friendly effort of Vicar General Raffener of Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn, through whom the very beginning of their apostolate of education was effected; such was the generosity of Right Reverend Dr. Loughlin (first Bishop of Brooklyn), who advanced them, at a critical moment, the necessary funds for the purchase of a dwelling.

Details of it all, the darkness and the dawning, is told in fascinating fashion by Christine Sevier, in a volume which she has named, "From Ratisbon Cloisters," and to her who has gleaned so skillfully, our grateful acknowledgments are due.

As we read and sympathize, visualizing something of the loneliness and disappointment that marked this earliest period of sojourn in a strange land, there comes to us again echoes of that Divine promise, never nullified even though its performance be delayed, the promise of Him—

"Who never willed a gall-cup filled  
Or scourged a heart to bleed—  
But He gave the balm and the healing calm  
For the wound and the hour of strife;  
And set a gem in some diadem,  
And a name in the book of Life!"

PART TWO  
RELIGIOUS LIFE AND ACTIVITIES IN THE EAST





## CHAPTER FOUR

### RELIGIOUS VOCATION

THE father who had at length succeeded in making a home in the metropolitan city for his little family, was now anxiously looking forward to their happy reunion. He also entertained high hopes that his daughter with her brilliant intellect and thorough grounding in educational matters would be of valuable assistance to him in his profession.

“God’s ways are not ours,” and this dream of the father was not to materialize. The long desired reunion was willed to be of short duration for Appolonia had other desires which she had not yet revealed even to the mother. Ever since infancy, one might say, she had cherished the idea of becoming a religious. When she entered the Sisters’ School, and came to know more about religious life, this desire was strengthened, and now in this summons to America she saw promise that her heart’s greatest craving might be realized.

Even at the early age of fifteen, she had learned a great deal about religious orders, knew that while in Germany a dowry was necessary in order to be admitted, in America this was not required, at least in a number of communities. All this meant en-

couragement since America was soon to be her home.

How evident is the ruling of Divine Providence in her regard! First, the father's departure for America under circumstances which, in a measure, compelled the child to practice from day to day those very duties which would fit her for caring later for spiritual children committed to her charge. Instead of childish pleasures and amusements, she was schooled in the spirit of self-sacrifice and denial, thus acquiring a foretaste of the sweetness of practical charity by exercising its privilege in the home.

The seed that, sown in early days, took root in her heart had now matured to a firm resolution. She was not aware, however, that her ardent desire would be realized so soon. One remarkable coincidence was the fact that Appolonia's first director in America was a son of St. Alphonsus, The Reverend Father Brandstetter. The Redemptorists, as shown earlier in this story, were the first to befriend and assist the poor pioneer Sisters from far-away Ratisbon, when they landed on American shores<sup>1</sup> to found the very community to which Appolonia applied for admission later on.

Great must have been the surprise, and to some degree, the grief of Appolonia's parents when, so soon after their happy reunion, she declared to them her firm resolve to consecrate her life to God.

---

<sup>1</sup> Christine Sevier, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

She met with little opposition on the part of her saintly mother, but her father could not see why this daughter with her mental capacity, lovable disposition—every gift that made for success in the world, should be allowed to shut herself up in a convent. This was a source of much grief to Appolonia for she dearly loved her father. She used every possible means to overcome his opposition and at last felt she had in a measure succeeded. (After Appolonia had entered, however, he wrote a letter to one of his friends in Germany in which he said, "My only treasure is now buried behind convent walls.")

Appolonia then appealed to her mother to accompany her on her journey to make application. Imagine the trembling steps and throbbing heart of the girl who knocked that day at the door of the Holy Cross Convent of Brooklyn! By her side was the patient mother, who, notwithstanding her own heart-ache, was ready like Abraham of old, in answer to the Divine call, to yield her only daughter to the service of the Master.

The humble little house which had sheltered the pioneer Sisters in the early days was still in use, standing among scattered dwellings, on bypaths that are today the teeming streets of a busy section. Can we not picture the scene when the prioress, Venerable Mother Seraphine, meeting the mother and child, learned the purpose of their call! With sympathetic voice the prioress said to the mother,

"Are you willing to give up your only daughter?" And in a voice broken with sobs the mother replied, "It is her wish and it will also be mine."

How the heart of the kind Superior must have gone out to the dear mother, ready to give up all for Him who had loaned her, as it were, this precious charge now to be taken away, and to the young aspirant whose longing she could read in the tear-bedewed countenance.

The simple arrangements were soon concluded and Appolonia entered the Novitiate of the illustrious Dominican Order on February 15, 1864. She was little more than fifteen years of age, probably one of the youngest and certainly one of the most promising of all the candidates received at Holy Cross Convent.

Only ten years had elapsed since the little band of four Sisters from the ancient cloister of Ratisbon had founded this Holy Cross Convent that received Appolonia within its hallowed walls. Surely those invisible and visible angels that so faithfully watched over her life, both physical and spiritual, in the days of childhood and youth, guided her within those cloistered walls to join a community of world-wide fame, whose support and glory, in fields as yet untilled, Divine Providence had destined her to become.

August 4, 1864, the feast of our Holy Father, St. Dominic, was a day of joy for Appolonia, as on that date she was clothed with the white habit of the

Order, and received the name of Sister Mary Aquinata in honor of the great Angelic Doctor of the Church—St. Thomas Aquinas. The investiture was preceded by a retreat of ten days as required by the Constitutions of the Order. We may be assured that the youthful aspirant, during this time of grace made ready for the coming event with a heart full of fervor and gratitude.

Her cousin, Mother Boniface, tells us that often when a small child, Mother Aquinata would look up at the blue sky and exclaim, "When I get big, I want a dress like that!" Perhaps the blue dress never became a reality but as a Dominican Sister, she came to share in the shelter shown to our glorious Saint Dominic by the Master Himself when, lifting the mantle of sapphire blue that seemed in the vision to envelop His Blessed Mother, He showed beneath its folds ("which in their immensity covered all the space of the Heavenly Country") a vast multitude of Dominicans!







ST. THOMAS, THE EUCHARISTIC DOCTOR  
Mother's Patron Saint.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### EARLY MISSION LIFE

**I**NSPIRED by the words of its great founder, St. Dominic, "The seed will fructify if sown; it will but moulder if hoarded," the Dominican Order from its very foundation sought to spread out and to reach as many souls as possible, neglecting no means which might lead to this end. Accordingly at the request of the Reverend Ambrose Buchmeier, pastor of St. Nicholas Church, Second Street, New York City, who wished to establish a school in connection with his church, the community at Holy Cross, Brooklyn, decided to permit three of its number to accept the new call, although their going meant much additional labor for the ones who remained.

Sister Augustine Neuhierl was placed in charge of the new school, with Sisters Cunigunda Schell and Rose Bosslet as helpers. Success crowned their efforts, and so rapid was the progress made that scarcely ten years after the opening of St. Nicholas School, a new foundation was formed with Mother Augustine Neuhierl as Prioress.<sup>1</sup> This separate branch, the first offshoot from Holy Cross, was called the Congregation of the Holy Rosary.

It was to the convent so established that our little

---

<sup>1</sup> Hieronymus Wilms, O.P., *op. cit.*, p. 381.

maid from overseas came as a novice in October, 1864, and here she remained for eight years with the exception of a short period before she made her profession on August 26, 1865.

Here she learned from the saintly Mother Augustine the traditions which all daughters of St. Dominic treasure as priceless possessions, and gathered from the example and precepts of the Superioress, stores of knowledge to be used later on in her own fields of labor.

Lessons of self-denial and mortification, of religious economy and industry, were inculcated day by day by Mother Augustine, whose practice it was to teach less by precept than by example, and who set a high value on the fundamental principles of the religious state. Never would she swerve in the smallest degree from the discipline or the conventual practices which she had learned in the Cloister of the Second Order at Ratisbon.

Although of noble birth and of wealthy family, Mother Augustine was a most humble soul. She was highly accomplished but of retiring manner and very pious. Everyone loved her and revered her as a saint. Her heart went out to the poor and suffering. During the great strike in New York for higher wages, it was an every-day occurrence for women and children to come to the Holy Rosary Convent, begging for food. In order to take care of this situation, she would send the Sisters to different bakeries and markets to ask for provisions



wherewith to serve the poor, that she might not be obliged to turn these unfortunate creatures away.

In the community life, her first thought was ever to help the Sisters, and to guide and inspire them in their important work of teaching the young. She soon recognized the superior talent of Sister Aquinata and left nothing undone to develop it. She managed to arrange for the best teachers from New York to tutor the young novice in the higher branches of learning, as well as in music and art. She seemed to feel that Sister Aquinata was destined by God to carry on a great work and did all in her power to fit her for her mission.

At this period Sister Aquinata was engaged chiefly in teaching at St. Nicholas Parochial School, spending her time after school hours in study, and in giving sewing lessons as a means of additional income for the convent.

When, upon the foundation of the new branch previously mentioned, several of the original community returned to Brooklyn whence they had come, Sister Aquinata remained; and we hear little of her in convent chronicles until her appointment by Mother Augustine, in 1872, as first superior to establish a mission in Jersey City.

In May, 1877, Mother Aquinata was called to the death bed of Mother Augustine. Prayers were offered by the community day and night for her recovery, but in spite of all that could be done for her, the time had come for her to pass to her reward.

At half-past seven, on the evening of May 20, she summoned all the Sisters to her bedside to receive her last message.

<sup>2</sup>"Dear Sisters," she said, "in order that you may never regret having entered this, our order and community, I must briefly tell how it came to be established in America. I entered the convent at Ratisbon when very young. We had to suffer a great deal but I always turned to God and gave my heart to Him alone. I had a special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary. For some years I was visited by the holy angels. They asked me if I would like to go to a new country but I answered, 'No!' They remained away for some time and then returned. The Infant Jesus also appeared and asked me if I would like to go to a new country, and again I answered, 'No!' Then He asked me whether I would go to America, saying that He would help me and that it would be well with me in that country. Again I answered, 'No!' that I would rather stay where I was. Still I added that if He wished me to go, I would do so. . . . In the course of time God directed things so that I came to America to establish these houses of the Order."

She also said, "Somewhere in the West a peninsula will be dotted white with Dominican foundations." It was but a few months later that the import of her prophetic words was understood.

---

<sup>2</sup> Mother Aquinata's manuscripts, Archives at Marywood.

Grief-stricken, the Sisters feared to leave Mother's side lest she should die in their absence, but she bade them go to their various duties, promising that she would not leave them until all the professed Sisters were present. On the twenty-fourth of May while the prayers for the dying were being said by her sorrowing children, Mother suddenly turned and looked all around the room. One of the Sisters caught the meaning of that look and realizing that Sister Petruina was missing, sent Mother Clementine,<sup>3</sup> then a novice, to take her place in the classroom. As soon as the missing Sister entered the chamber of death, the pure soul of Mother Augustine went forth to meet her Divine Savior.

Sister Xavier, another member of the community, was in a dying condition at the time. One of the Sisters went immediately and informed her that Mother had passed away. She replied at once, "Yes, I know. Mother came and told me she would come back for me in four months." Sister Xavier died exactly four months later.

The eighteen years during which Mother Augustine governed the community were crowned by God's special blessing as reward for the humble, unreserved devotion and sacrifice of its saintly Superior.

Mother Mary Hyacinth, a very spiritual woman,

---

<sup>3</sup> Mother Clementine came to Michigan shortly after her profession, 1879, where she has labored on various missions. She is now an active member of the Motherhouse Community at Marywood.

was chosen to succeed Mother Augustine, although Mother Aquinata was considered a better financier and of greater administrative ability. However, it soon became manifest that the choice of Mother Hyacinth was guided by the hand of God, and that for Mother Aquinata had been reserved the privilege of fulfilling the prophecy made by the saintly Mother Augustine.

## CHAPTER SIX

### OPENING OF NEW MISSION IN JERSEY CITY

**I**N September, 1872, the Reverend Father Krauss, pastor of St. Boniface Church, Jersey City, learning of the wonderful work that was being accomplished by the Dominican Sisters at Holy Rosary Convent, Second Street, New York, applied to the Prioress, Venerable Mother Augustine, for Sisters to open a school in Jersey City.

Mother Augustine granted his request and, accordingly, sent five Sisters to establish this new mission: Sisters Aquinata, Theresa, Michael, Josepha, and Clara,<sup>1</sup> with Sister Aquinata in charge, the first Superior sent forth from Holy Rosary. The little convent to which they went was a house containing four rooms—a frame building for which the Sisters paid \$838.87 in cash, half of the total cost.

Here, on the seventeenth of September, these heroic souls opened school with an enrollment of sixty-five children. The little house soon became inadequate for their needs and Mother Aquinata received the necessary permission from the Prioress to make preparations for building. For the accomplishment of this enterprise, the Sisters were permitted to raise money by collecting from house to

---

<sup>1</sup> From manuscripts and journals written in Mother Aquinata's own hand writing which are now preserved in the Archives at Marywood, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



house. When not collecting they were busily engaged with the needle as a means of income. Sacrifice was indeed the slogan of these holy women.

In the meantime it became absolutely necessary to build an addition to the first convent, and work on this addition was begun in the Spring of 1874, during Holy Week. The new part of the building was of brick, erected at a cost of more than two thousand dollars, and was dedicated on the feast of St. Vincent de Paul.<sup>2</sup>

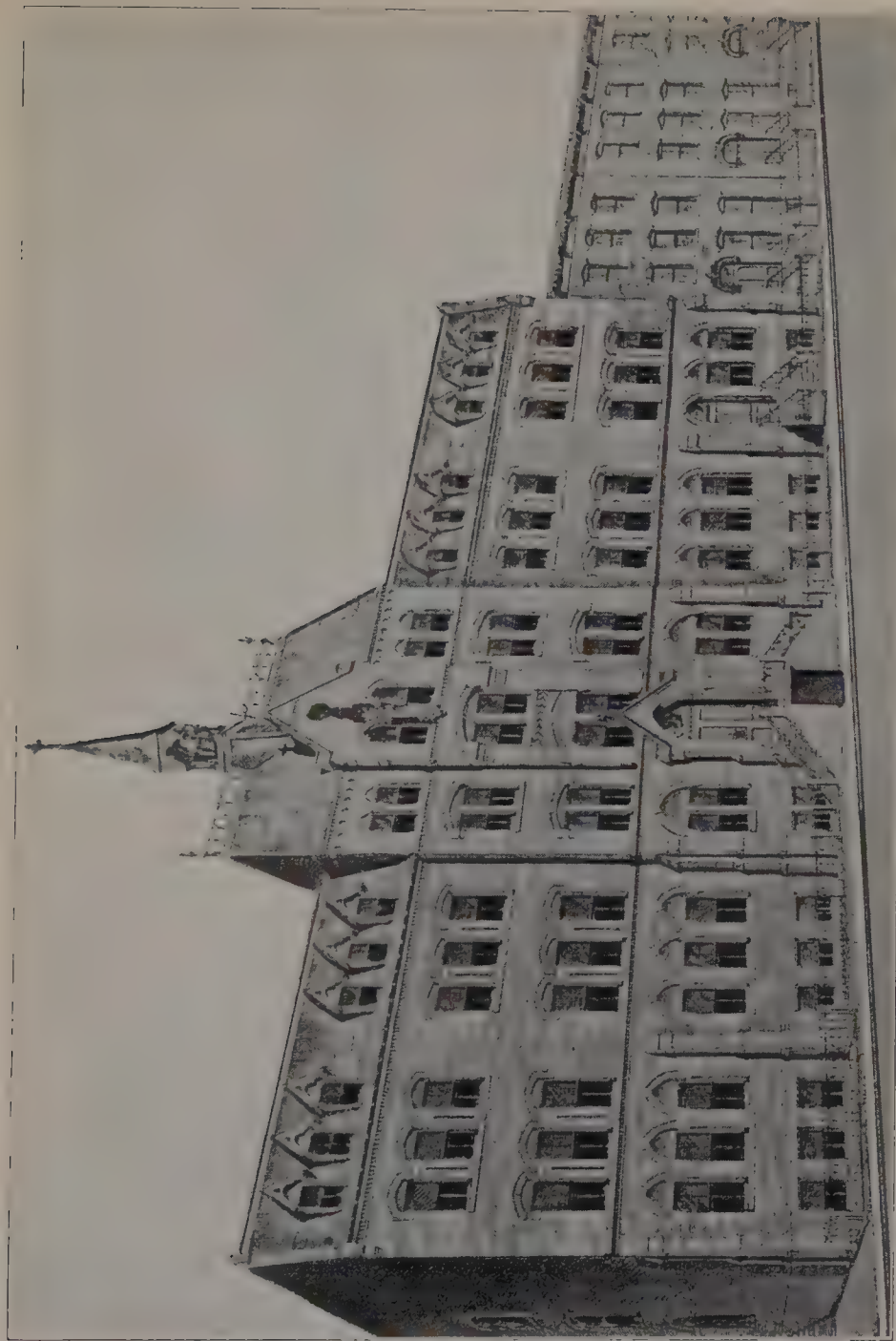
The great work that now lay before the young Superior was the erection of a substantial structure to serve adequately as convent and academy. Four pieces of land, close to the original convent, appeared to be especially suitable for the purpose, but in order to secure them the purchase had to be made in 1873 at a cost of sixteen thousand dollars.<sup>3</sup> The money had to be borrowed and interest paid on it, but the intrepid Mother Aquinata did not hesitate to accept this new burden. It was God's work she was doing and it was to Him that she looked directly for help in carrying it on.

Her confidence in her Divine Master was not placed in vain. The Reverend Dominic Krauss, first pastor of St. Boniface Church, gave whole-hearted support and encouragement to the Sisters whom the pious parishoners of St. Boniface, rich and poor alike, loved and venerated, giving generously of their means to the end that a school worthy of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



ST. DOMINIC CONVENT, JERSEY CITY, N. J.  
Built in 1878.



parish might be erected. Of these good friends, Mr. George A. Brock and Mr. Severding deserve mention as special benefactors of the parish and school.

On the first day of April, 1878, ground was broken for the new building—beautiful St. Dominic Convent still regarded as a memorial to the beloved first Superior.

Before that stage of work was reached, Mother Aquinata had heard and accepted the onward call to new fields of endeavor as the succeeding chapter of our record will show. Ever obedient to the Higher Will, she accompanied a missionary band of sisterhood to Michigan in '77, returning from there some two months later to resume the burden which she considered, no doubt, peculiarly her own, because of her early efforts in starting the undertaking. During these trying months that elapsed between the commencement of building operations and the dedication of the finished structure, Mother remained at the Jersey City house to plan and supervise; when the great day had come and gone, she bade a long and (as it proved to be) a last "Adieu" to the scenes of her early labors and successes and retraced her steps to Michigan, the "Peninsula of Promise."

During the early days of Mother Aquinata's term in Jersey City, her cousin, Sister Boniface, who had received the habit on September thirteenth, 1872, came to join the little community.

The following beautiful tribute to the young Superior was written in a letter by Sister Mary Philip, O. P., who is now Secretary General at Mt. St. Dominic Academy, Caldwell, New Jersey:

"I lived with Mother Aquinata," she writes, "for eight months, as a novice. She appealed to me more than any other Sister and, therefore, I observed her closely and made every effort to imitate her.

"Mother was very exact about every point of the Rule, especially the rule of silence which she never violated in the convent( this evidently refers to the brick addition to the original convent, described above). We had strict conventual observance. Not only in the letter was she precise but also in the spirit of the rule expressed in the opening clause: 'Above all, beloved Sisters, love God and then your neighbor.' She certainly saw to it that the Sisters exercised a kindly spirit, a sisterly charity towards each other.

"She was very precise about the processional singing, and if every tone was not in perfect harmony, she would summon all the Sisters to the music room to practice the sacred songs, the *Libera*, the *Salve*, the *O Lumen Ecclesiae*.

"Every morning she would call the Sisters at half-past four and light the gas in their cells. At eight in the evening the bell was rung for night prayers, after which she retired with the community.

"She never inflicted a penance for breaking any



of the kitchen utensils; but for leaving anything out of place, or handling books without having first washed our hands, she certainly was not sparing. When we lived in the little four-room house, it was a model of cleanliness, and Mother radiated a spirit of sweet cheerfulness and love of poverty.

“Every day found her in the kitchen helping to prepare dinner for the Sisters. It seemed to afford her much pleasure to have something palatable for us when we came home from school. Mother did not teach while I was with her for she had to give all her time to constructive planning, gathering funds, building, and so forth.”

Sister Mary Philip adds: “She was generous in giving hospitality to the members of other communities although I cannot vouch for where they slept.”

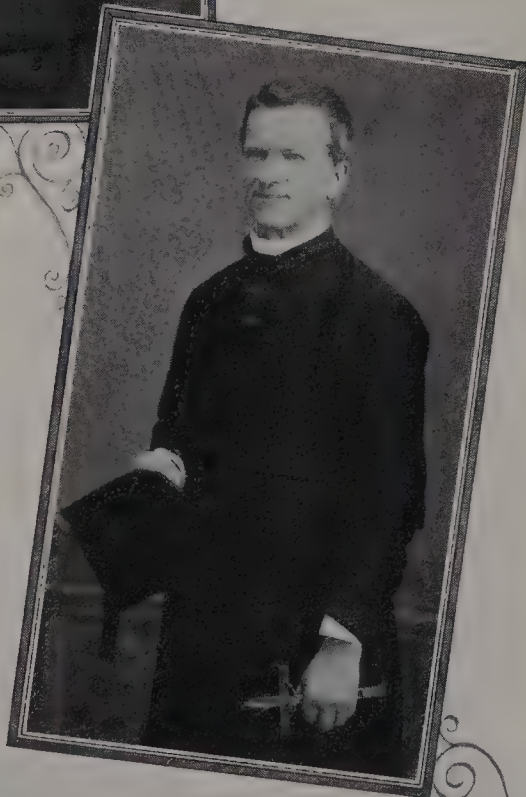
How touching is this picture of the good Mother, preparing with her own hands some tasty dish for her own Sisters whose pleasures, indeed, were few and simple enough in the life of toil and sacrifice to which they were called! We may be sure that if her spiritual children admired Mother Aquinata for her superior ability and esteemed her for signal virtues, it was for just such little acts of kindness as this that they loved her.

One wonders, too, how often she thought, as she performed this labor of love in the convent kitchen, of those early days in the little German town when, as housekeeper in the absence of her mother and

aunt, and as guardian of her young cousins, she strove to learn the secrets of successful cooking, and tried her small hands for the first time at the intricacies of household economy.



RT. REV.  
IGNATIUS  
MRAK D. D.



REV. GEORGE  
ZIEGLER



PART THREE  
RELIGIOUS LIFE AND ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST





## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SCENE OF FIRST DOMINICAN ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST, TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

IT was May of 1877, the month that because of its virginal loveliness has from the earliest days been considered a special dowry of our Blessed Lady, that the saintly Mother Augustine passed to her reward. Ever in the memory of the sorrowing Sisterhood from whom she had been called, echoed her farewell words of counsel and prophecy.

"Somewhere in the West," she had said, (the West of that new country, to the Eastern shore of which she had come long years before in obedience to the Master's call) "Somewhere in the West, a peninsula will be dotted white with Dominican foundations."

And even as the heart of the glorious Dominic had been gladdened by the wondrous sight vouchsafed him, "of an immensity of space peopled by a vast multitude of his own followers," so was the spirit of this devoted daughter who was willing to be classed among the least of his little ones.

No member of that bereaved Sisterhood of the Holy Rosary had ever for an instant doubted that their beloved Mother's prophecy should, in God's good time, come true, but even these faithful ones could scarcely have counted on such speedy fulfill-

ment as was accorded. Within a few months of her death and the election of her successor, another summons sounded within the quiet walls of Holy Rosary Convent. Mother Mary Hyacinth, the new Prioress, heard and acceded gladly, recognizing without doubt the mystic "call of the West" foreseen by her sainted predecessor.

It came through one already known as a tireless laborer in the vineyard of Christ, the Reverend George Ziegler, who had just been assigned by the Right Reverend Bishop Borgess of Detroit to the newly formed parish of St. Francis, Traverse City, in the Northern part of the Southern Peninsula of Michigan.

Before attempting any particulars regarding the new mission, its energetic founder, or the band of valiant women who hastened to his aid, a little information regarding the peninsula itself may help to a better understanding of the difficulties that beset the effort.

Just one hundred years ago, not a lengthy period in the history of a nation or a state, the entire territory which now comprises the Diocese of Grand Rapids was one vast wilderness, with a few white settlers throughout its whole extent. It was in the latter part of the seventeenth century that the first Catholic priest visited this section of Michigan but the Sacrament of Confirmation was not adminis-

tered within its bounds until the arrival of the Right Reverend Edward Fenwick, O. P., in 1827.<sup>1</sup>

On March 8, 1833, Pope Gregory XVI established the See of Detroit and appointed the Right Reverend Frederick Reese its first bishop. This early bishopric extended over the entire state of Michigan. In 1853, Upper Michigan was made a Vicariate Apostolic, with the Right Reverend Frederick Baraga as its first bishop, his residence being at Sault Ste. Marie, later transferred to Marquette when the diocese became known by the name of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette. While this did not properly include any of the Lower Peninsula, good Bishop Baraga, at the request of Bishop LeFevre of Detroit, took charge of the Indian missions as far south as Little Traverse and Grand Traverse.

On May 19, 1882, a papal brief established the Grand Rapids diocese which extended over the counties of the Lower Peninsula, north of the southern line of the counties of Ottawa, Kent, Montcalm, Gratiot, and Saginaw, and west of the eastern line of the counties of Saginaw, Bay, and adjacent islands. The Right Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, D.D., was named as its first incumbent.

The religious education of the young was the matter uppermost in the minds of all the bishops and priests of these early days and efforts were

---

<sup>1</sup> V. F. O'Daniel, O.P., *Life of Reverend Edward Fenwick, O.P.*, p. 360.

made to secure teachers who should assist in the apostolic work. The number of Sisters in Upper Michigan was entirely inadequate for the needs of the time, so help was sought in the larger cities of the East.

None knew better than Father Ziegler, the pastor of the new parish of St. Francis, Traverse City, the great need for Catholic training if the faith were to be kept alive and bear fruit for the future. Consequently, his first step toward solidifying his parish was to find a religious community of women to undertake this work. After several unsuccessful attempts, he turned to Holy Rosary Convent, East Second Street, New York, where Mother Mary Hyacinth was Prioress.

Here his plea for help met with prompt response. The good Prioress selected five of her Sisters, Sisters Boniface, Angela, Camilla, Borromeo, and Martha, and these under the direction of Mother Aquinata, left New York and journeyed westward, arriving at their destination on Thursday, October 23, 1877.<sup>1</sup>

Many were the hardships of that journey. Needless to say, "accommodations were of the most meagre kind." But these difficulties were quickly forgotten in the warmth of the welcome extended by pastor and people to the newcomers.

A temporary dwelling was secured to serve as school and convent. The building (on the East side

---

<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Church in the United States, p. 137.



of Union Street, between Eighth and Ninth Streets. Traverse City) was purchased by Father Ziegler who paid the price—a thousand dollars—from his own purse. The Congregation supplied the furnishings which cost an additional six hundred dollars.

In this home the Sisters lived for almost six years. On its ground floor there were two classrooms, in one of which Mass was celebrated on week days, and early Mass and Vespers with Benediction, on Sundays and Holy days. The second floor was the Sisters' dwelling and contained a small chapel, a sitting room, two bedrooms, and a kitchen.

On the Monday following their arrival in Traverse City, October 27th, school was opened with only six pupils in attendance. At the end of the year, barely two months later, there were fifty!

The beginning was, indeed, hard. Many were the obstacles and the difficulties, but the example of the heroic Father Ziegler, and the material help and encouragement of the faithful farmers of St. Francis Parish, whose persevering generosity cannot be emphasized too much, bore fruit and the good work thus begun, continued and prospered.

After Mother Aquinata had seen that all was going well, Mother Boniface was placed in charge, and Mother Aquinata was recalled to Jersey City, where the community under her guidance had secured a desirable site for the convent-school building they had needed for so long. There Mother Aquinata remained until the red-letter day of dedication for

beautiful St. Dominic's had passed, and then in May of 1879, not quite two years after the first arrival of the Sisters in Michigan, she returned to Traverse City to take permanent charge of the young community. Its importance was clear to her as the first of the many Dominican foundations destined to arise within the boundaries of that *Peninsula* showing so fair in the deathbed vision of her venerated Mother Augustine.

\* \* \* \* \*

Not unlike the "breaking of home ties" in the fatherland long years before, must this departure from the scene of her earlier labors have seemed to Mother Aquinata; from the beauty and completeness of St. Dominic Convent, to every detail of which her prayerful thought had been given, she must turn again to the crude beginnings of pioneer institutions. But not hers to falter or hesitate. Still within St. Dominic's walls are tenderly cherished traditions, as they may now be called, of loving labor Mother Aquinata gave to this, her earliest task. Forty years after her departure, Sisters Matitia and Albertina, two members of her community in Michigan, visiting Jersey City, were shown the chair that had been hers at table, the very simplest of its kind, and the visitors loved to relate how the Mother who had been her successor there, and the whole community listened with boundless satisfaction to the story of her remarkable achievements in far-off Michigan.



MOTHER MARY GONSALVA, O.P.  
Second Mother General.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### NEW MISSIONS OPENED

“**A** PENINSULA in the West will be dotted white with Dominican foundations!” Never was prophecy more literally fulfilled. The little mission at Traverse City, that first venture of the Dominicans in Michigan, became as a stone cast into a still pool, the center of ever widening circles of Dominican activities.

When Mother Aquinata returned from New York in May, 1879, to resume charge of the young community at Traverse City, the time was ripe for new effort. The work of the self-sacrificing Sisters, or as termed by many of the clergymen, “penitential Sisters,”<sup>1</sup> was becoming known and appreciated. Applications for teachers to open new institutions had already reached New York from Fathers Wallace of St. Mary’s, Adrian, Van Pammel of St. Mary’s, Muskegon, and Meador of Port Austin.

On August twenty-eighth, therefore, the feast of the great St. Augustine, the second band of Sisters from Holy Rosary Convent, New York, reached St. Mary’s, Adrian, with Mother Boniface in charge. Sisters Ludovica, Athanasius and Alexia accompanied her. Following closely came another group to take charge of St. Mary School, Muskegon.

---

<sup>1</sup> Drane, History of St. Catherine of Siena, Vol. 1, p. 26, 34.



The Sisters destined for this mission were Mother Cecelia, Superior, and Sisters Clementine, DeSales, and Barbara.

Mother Aquinata met both groups of Sisters on their arrival, assisted them in preparing for the opening of their respective missions, and was to them, a tower of strength and a light for their guidance in those first hard days. Though still young in years herself, she was imbued with the leonine spirit of a Dominic. Her only ambition was to uphold and demonstrate the ideals of the illustrious Founder—zeal for the Church, and love of souls.

In October of the same year, Mother Emilia, Sisters Gonsalva, Walburga, and Baptista left their peaceful convent home in New York City to open a school in Port Austin. It is interesting to note that Sister Gonsalva, later known as Mother Gonsalva, became the worthy successor of Mother Aquinata after her death. These Sisters brought with them from the East a young lady named Mary Dorsey, who was later invested with the habit at Port Austin by special dispensation. She is now known as Mother Mary Blanche, Mother General of the parent foundation in New York City—the beloved Motherhouse which has since been transferred to St. Mary-on-the-Hudson, Newburgh, New York.

It would be difficult, indeed, to give an adequate idea of the hardships that beset these pioneer Sisters. Though they had not looked forward to a life of ease and comfort, still they were scarcely pre-

pared for the privations awaiting them. Especially was this true in Port Austin, where they were often unable to procure even the necessities of life. Filled with the spirit of St. Dominic, however, and encouraged by letters and visits from Mother Aquinata, they struggled on amid difficulties, laid solid educational foundations in their respective missions, and are now either reaping the reward of early labors and sacrifices in the Master's Kingdom, or else rejoicing here in the increasing prosperity and acknowledged usefulness of the Dominican Order.

In October, 1881, Mother Aquinata with Sisters Hieronyma, Ligouri, and Lawrence, opened St. Boniface School, Bay City. The Sisters occupied a small house on Birney Street, and suffered many inconveniences, but Mother always encouraged them with assurances that all foundations which are to be lasting must bear the impress of the Cross, and religious beginnings are invariably attended by poverty, difficulties, and suffering. "We must not become disheartened," she was wont to say, "but ever try to follow in the footsteps of our Divine Savior."

Her first care was that the Sisters should have the Blessed Sacrament under their roof as the great Center of community life. Truly a labor of love was the fitting up of the chapel in each new house. Always it was simple and poor, but within its bare walls the Sisters knelt in faith and trust to beg God's blessing on their work. They toiled zealously

and cheerfully, relying for guidance and strength on Him Whose work they had in all humility set their hands to do.

About the same time that St. Boniface School was opened, another was begun in Battle Creek with Sister Magdalene in charge, assisted by Sisters Borromeo and Agatha. Sister Borromeo was later compelled to return to Traverse City on account of ill health which she suffered patiently until it pleased God to call her home on December 30, 1881. She seemed to realize that the new year should open with joy for she said to the Sisters kneeling around her bed, "Do not toll the bell but ring the chimes."

Mother Aquinata was not allowed to remain long at St. Boniface School. In the following year, she was called to extend the apostolic field in Michigan by opening a school in St. Joseph Parish of the same city. It is good to realize the loving way of Providence as exhibited in the following incident which led to the opening of St. Joseph School by the Dominican Sisters.

In the month of May, 1881, Venerable Mother Hyacinth, accompanied by Sister M. Barbara of Holy Rosary Convent and Motherhouse, New York, set out for Traverse City, Michigan, to visit her distant children and encourage them in their work. On Saturday night, the tired travelers reached Bay City. They were directed to St. Joseph Rectory, then on Washington Street. The Reverend M. U. Thibodeau, the pastor, received them

cordially and saw that they were properly entertained. They remained until Monday before continuing their journey and it was then that the pastor seized the opportunity to beg for Sisters to take charge of his school, which at that time was taught by lay teachers.

Mother Hyacinth could not refuse the good priest's urgent request, therefore, gave her promise at once that Sisters would be sent to him. Accordingly, on September second of the following year, St. Joseph School was opened by Mother Aquinata, who had as her assistants, Sisters Ignatius, Leonarda, Mannes, Cherubina, and George.

St. Joseph Church was at that time a combination building located on Washington Avenue, one wing serving as school until the new church on the corner of Grant and Second Streets (then under construction) was dedicated on October fifteenth. This was also a combination building, having a North and South wing that served as school. The rooms were equipped with pews which on Sundays served their original purpose; but during the week were converted into school desks for the children. The kneeling benches were used for seats and the pews for desks! Imagine the poor teachers endeavoring to supervise the little ones who were, the greater part of the time, hidden from view back of the tall pews! What courage, what vigilance, what almost superhuman patience it must have required to teach at all under such conditions!



The Sisters' residence near the new church had not been completed so that they were obliged every morning to walk seven blocks to receive Holy Communion. Eight o'clock found them ready to accompany their charges to the church to assist at Holy Mass. After the day's work in school was over with its burden of physical stress and mental strain, the Sisters returned to their little convent home in time for Matins and Lauds. After supper came preparation for the next day's classes, spiritual reading, and meditation. Reasonable recreation, rest, even the simplest comforts for the body were conspicuous by their absence. The soul received grace and strength directly from God, as it were, for the media He loves to use were not always available and spiritual privileges were few, indeed. Yet these trying years were filled with a spirit of love, of cheerfulness, of mutual helpfulness that rendered every labor easy and made every hardship light.

Mother Aquinata remained at St. Joseph's until the new convent under construction at Traverse City demanded her close supervision. Returning then to the scene of her first mission in the West, she devoted all her attention for a time to the new home of the community.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile, a parish had been established at St. Joseph's, Muskegon, in 1884, and the Reverend Father Benning's first care was to apply for Sisters to open a school. Thus another important begin-



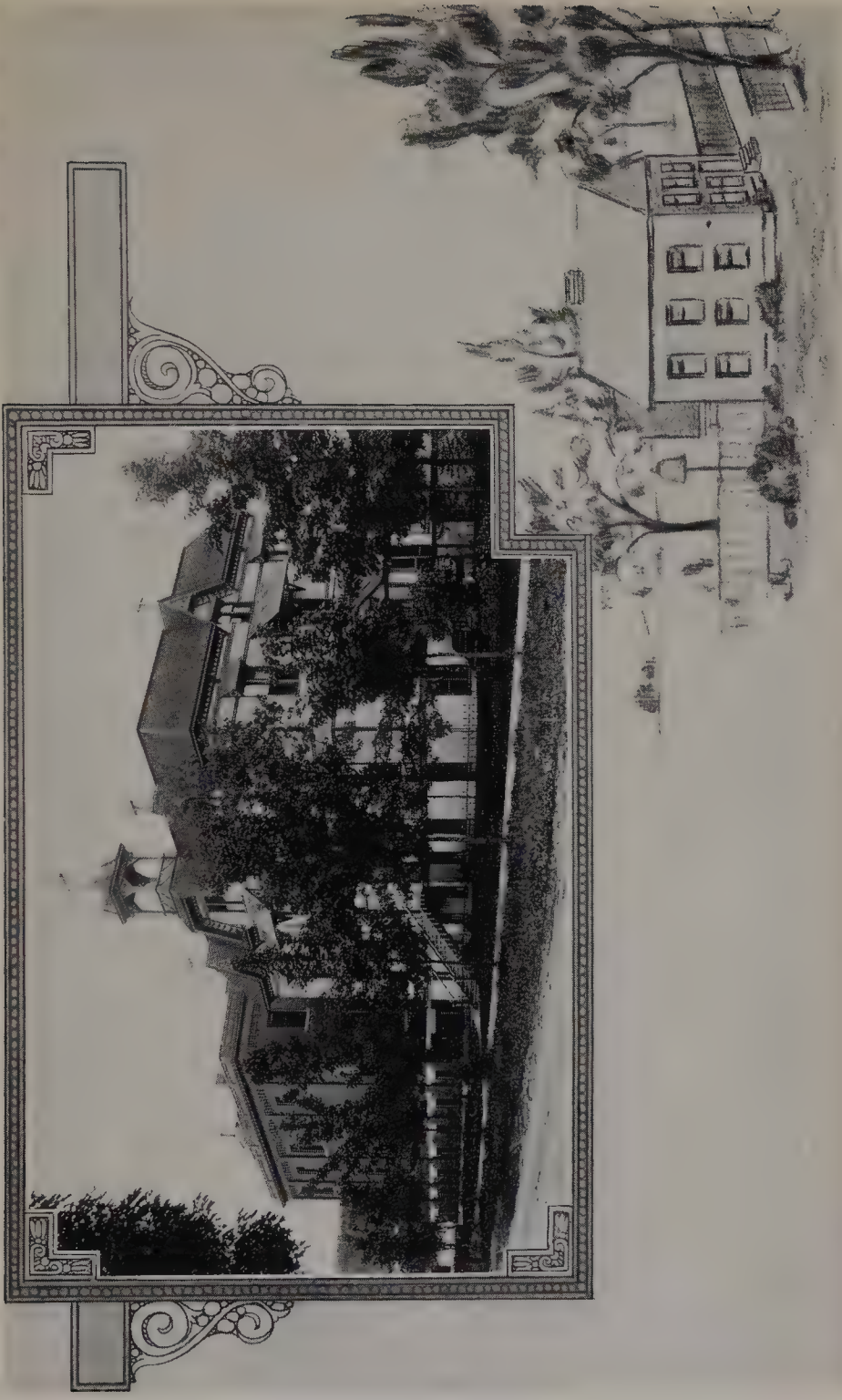
ning was made when, on August 28, 1884, Sisters Celestine, Alcantara, Stella, and Johanna took the Muskegon school in charge.

In May of '84, Mother Rose came to Michigan from the East to open a hospital at Adrian. This undertaking was begun at the earnest solicitation of the zealous pastor, the Reverend Casimir Rochowski, to whose school the Dominican Sisters had come as teachers in 1880.

In Saginaw, Michigan, stood a plain wooden building, at the corner of Third and Potter Streets. Here St. Joseph Parish School was conducted with an efficient lay teacher, Miss Anne Caldwell, in charge. By the spring of 1885, the school had increased to such proportions that the pastor, the Reverend Richard Sweeney, felt justified in applying to Mother Aquinata for Sisters. The school was taken over the following autumn by Sisters Gabriel, James, Eleanor, Justina, and Alexia, in a new building at Seventh and Sears Streets. Under the direction of the Sisters this new school grew and prospered and before long had acquired the reputation of being one of the largest and best schools where children could complete the work of twelve grades.

Casting a retrospective glance over the work of these pioneer Sisters, one cannot fail to note how manifest was God's blessing and approval of their humble efforts. Whatever they touched, prospered. However rough the going, however discouraging the obstacles, however severe the hardships, the

road they trod in humility and patience led always  
to success.



HOLY ANGELS CONVENT, TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

Cradle of Dominican Sisters in Michigan.



## CHAPTER NINE

### HOLY ANGELS CONVENT BECOMES PROVINCIAL- ATE AND NOVITIATE

**E**DUCATION had always been one of the most important objects of the Catholic Church. Indeed, it might well be said that the history of civilization and education is the history of the achievement of the Church. In the so-called "dark ages" when Europe was over-run by barbarians and even kings boasted of illiteracy, the Church of Christ kept alive scholastic traditions, labored unceasingly to spread a love of learning, founded schools and universities, and from the chaos of ignorance and superstition, brought forth the enlightenment and civilization of modern times.

In our own country, amid difficulties as great, though of a different nature, the work of the Church was carried forward in the same spirit by priests and Sisters who endured every variety of suffering and privation to the end that sound Catholic education might be assured to all. And all over the land, schools, academies, and universities under Catholic auspices bear living witness to the persevering faith, the endless toil, and sacrifice of these noble men and women.

Mother Aquinata, imbued with the idea that the beauty of truth, the refining and elevating influence



of education are meant for all, was fired with a holy ambition to establish an institution wherein there might be installed facilities for the training and education of the heart, the intellect, and the will. She also had in mind the fact that a large convent-building would enable her Sisters to assemble from time to time for spiritual refreshment, to take counsel together, and to join, at certain seasons, in the conventual exercises and solemnities of the Order, so dear to the heart of Saint Dominic; dear also to Mother Aquinata who tried earnestly to carry out every precept of the venerated Founder.

In due course of time, Mother communicated her desires in this matter to her Superiors in New York. Knowledge of her executive ability and the memory of her signal success in former undertakings were strong recommendations to those in charge. Her new project was soon approved, and plans were ordered to be drawn up by Architect Hilton for a convent and boarding school in Traverse City which should become an inspiration for religion and education in all Michigan.

The Honorable Perry Hannah of Traverse City donated six lots as a site for the new convent and work was begun in 1883. Once again, Father Ziegler came to the aid of the Sisters, providing a large part of the funds needed to complete the building. The Right Reverend Ignatius Mrak, formerly bishop of Marquette, was another benefactor whose kindly deeds at this time will long be remembered.

A few words regarding this benefactor will no doubt be accepted here. From motives of humility and peculiar zeal for the welfare of the Indians, he had resigned his See in the year 1878, and was living in Eagletown, near Traverse City, where he spent his days in prayer and active care of the Indians of that locality. This saintly bishop paid frequent visits to the Sisters at Traverse City, encouraging them in their work and aiding them materially by his generous donations. Many a benefaction noted only by the Recording Angel is credited to him. One of which special mention should be made, was the donation of ten lots purchased by him at a cost of twelve hundred and fifty dollars, and presented to the Sisters.

Profound and never-ceasing gratitude is due him and all the noble benefactors of the Traverse City Convent.

\* \* \* \* \*

In August of 1883, Holy Angels Convent was completed and furnished, much to the joy of Mother Aquinata and her grateful community. The day appointed for its dedication was the first Sunday in October—the feast of the Holy Rosary, when the Right Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, D.D., the first bishop of the newly erected See of Grand Rapids, officiated. The dedication to the Holy Angels of this Dominican Convent was one of the first ceremonies performed by him after he had been made bishop.

On the following day, classes were removed from the humble home on Union Street which, up to this time, had served as church, school, and residence for the Sisters, to the beautiful new structure, so happily named. The delight of both Sisters and pupils knew no bounds when they found themselves in this inspiring environment after their six years' sojourn in the old quarters under such trying conditions.

In a very short time the convent-school was filled to capacity. Boarders came from nearby villages. Parents were eager to place their girls in the Sisters' care and thus give them opportunity to prepare for the responsibilities of life under such guidance and instruction as these good people felt only the Sisters could impart. A beautiful spirit prevailed throughout the convent. It became a true home to those fortunate enough to dwell within its walls. Many happy moments were spent in the dear little chapel, and from that Tabernacle came the Divine Voice that led many of the girls later on, to break all earthly ties and follow the Master.

\* \* \* \* \*

As we have seen, many missions in Michigan were now under the charge of these self-sacrificing Dominican Sisters who had left comfortable convents in New York to work amid many privations in this new field, for souls less fortunate in worldly possessions than those in the East. Other mission fields were ready and other pastors were eager to

open parochial schools, but the laborers were insufficient in number to meet all demands. The Motherhouse in New York had already made most generous sacrifices for the good cause, yet it seemed impossible to further the work under existing conditions.

The Right Reverend Bishop Richter, who recognized the possibilities of his co-laborers and especially of the leader of the little colony, Mother Aquinata, negotiated with the proper authorities in New York, and obtained permission in August, 1885, for all the houses in Michigan to be formed into the new Province of St. Joseph's.

Thus Holy Angels Convent became the Provincialate and Novitiate of the Dominican Sisters in Michigan. This was really the first step toward permanency in our beloved State.

The first reception held in the new Provincialate was on May 5, 1886 (when Miss Josephine Gagnier, a young lady from St. Joseph Parish, Bay City, was clothed with the Dominican habit and received the name, Sister Mary Henrietta. Sister Mary Paschal, who had been received in New York, made her profession on the same day. Although Sister Henrietta, who is now reaping the heavenly reward of her toil, was the first postulant received after the formation of St. Joseph Province, Sister Mary Cherubina claims the honor of being the first product of the Dominican Sisters in Michigan. She



entered in Traverse City on December 8, 1880, and Mother Hyacinth gave permission for her to receive the habit in the chapel of the Sisters' humble dwelling on Union Street, July 21, 1881, but she was obliged to go to the Motherhouse in New York for her profession.

Another event which deserves record in the history of the pioneer Sisters of Michigan was the retreat at Holy Angels in July, 1886. This was afterwards known as the year of the *Big Retreat*, for it was the first time the Sisters from the various missions had assembled for a general retreat. Previously, owing to lack of funds and inadequate accommodations, retreats were made privately in the mission houses. Great was the joy of those who were now summoned for the first time to their new convent home, to make a real retreat! It was conducted by the famous Father Coppens, S.J.

Representatives from Muskegon, Adrian, Port Austin, Bay City, Gagetown, and Saginaw were present—*thirty* in all. The Sisters, during these special days of grace, held, you may be sure, long and close communion with their beloved Master, spoke the inmost secrets of their hearts to Him as never before, and listened with renewed faith and hope and gratitude to His words of counsel. Our Divine Lord, Who had welcomed the first brave band of six in their humble little chapel nine years before, now looked down from the Tabernacle in this beautiful temple with the same love, the same



words of comfort and of inspiration. Who knows but that He whispered to some of them that even as the six had grown to thirty so also should the thirty grow to three hundred for the glory of His Name and the honor of St. Dominic?

At the close of the retreat, Mother Aquinata spoke words of encouragement to the Sisters, commended the work they were doing and exhorted them to continue bravely, undaunted by the many hardships and privations they were obliged to endure.

It was on this occasion that Mother appointed Sister Mary Ligouri, Novice Mistress. Until this time Mother had herself looked after the training of the few recruits God had sent into His vineyard, but now that the labor of the Sisters was bearing fruit as evidenced by the greater number of religious vocations, it had become necessary to place in charge of them one Sister who could give all her attention to this most important work of a community—the training of its novices. Sister Ligouri's first postulants were received on November twenty-fifth of that same year, and are now known as Sisters Mary Aloysius, Dominic, and Joseph.





ST. JOHN HOME, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN  
Temporary Motherhouse (1889-1922)



## CHAPTER TEN

### NEW RESPONSIBILITIES ASSUMED—CARE OF ORPHANS

“Suffer the little children to come unto Me,  
and forbid them not.”

FROM the earliest days of Christianity, the Church has been most solicitous for the homeless little ones of its flock. In fact it has not only considered it a charity but a sacred duty to care for the helpless orphans. Bishops are specifically directed to erect orphanages in their various diocese and to maintain them at the expense of the Church. St. Augustine writes by way of injunction: “The bishop protects the orphans.”

Therefore, one of the first problems that confronted our good Bishop Richter when appointed to the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was how to devise ways and means to provide for the wants of the orphans. The problem was partially solved by the generous benefaction of the charitable John Clancy. Before his death in 1888, he devised to the Right Reverend Bishop Richter the sum of \$60,000 to be used for the purchase of grounds and the erection of a suitable building for an orphan asylum to be located in the Cathedral City, Grand Rapids.

This was, indeed, a heaven-sent gift, for the diocese was still very poor, and the blessing of the



Father of the Orphans must follow Mr. Clancy for his benevolence. The corner stone of St. John Home was laid in August, 1888, and within one year the central portion of the present structure was finished and ready for occupancy.

Bishop Richter had watched with gratification the progress of the Dominican Community at Traverse City, had admired their heroic and self-sacrificing efforts. Theirs was the spirit he wished should animate those to be charged with the care of the cherished ones of his diocese—the little orphans. He, therefore, applied to Mother Aquinata, asking that she assume charge of the newly erected orphanage.

In her heart Mother Aquinata could scarcely see how this new request could be granted, for she was already having difficulty in supplying the demands of the school missions, but with a heroism worthy of a St. Catherine, she unhesitatingly accepted this new burden. She turned to God for help, confident that He would not fail her.

Acting on the inspiration of the hour, she summoned Sisters Adelaide, DeSales, and Agatha to Grand Rapids, having first made arrangements to fill their present places. She herself met them when they arrived at Grand Rapids, and their work at St. John's was begun in August, 1889. Twelve little waifs were brought to the Sisters at once; before the close of the year, they had thirty-five under their care.

With the inception of St. John Home, came the establishment of St. Alphonsus School. In fact the two institutions are so closely connected that the history of the one involves the history of the other. The Redemptorist Fathers had been in charge of St. Alphonsus Parish since September, 1888; indeed, the parish was really started by the celebration of Holy Mass in St. John Home on the morning of September 2, 1888, although the building was then scarcely under roof.

When the good Fathers, amid numerous difficulties, had brought the work to such a point that it was necessary for "reserves" to "come and teach" and confirm the undertaking, they called upon Mother Aquinata for Sisters. Here again, Mother, through a wise arrangement, was able to grant their request, securing Sisters Cyprian, Sabina, Ignatius, and Alacoque to take charge of the school.

Thus the Dominican Sisters began their work of education in the city of Grand Rapids on September 2, 1889; the school opening on that date with an enrollment of one hundred and eighty children. Year after year witnessed steady progress. With numerical increase came necessary improvements and additions, until now St. Alphonsus School stands high as an institution of learning and holds a prominent place among the schools of the city.

The following, written on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the parish by a son of St. Alphon-

sus, gives evidence of the esteem in which the Sister Teachers are held:

“Since September 2, 1889, St. Alphonsus School has been blessed in having these holy and learned teachers, Sisters of St. Dominic, who have given up home and friends to consecrate their lives and energies to the cause of Catholic education. Needless to say, those who have trodden the rugged path of knowledge under these Sisters’ skillful guidance, and have from day to day, and from grade to grade, seen the lessons of virtue which they taught, exemplified in their own daily lives, will ever remember with deepest appreciation the love and care bestowed upon them by these zealous and devoted teachers.”

In turn, the Redemptorist Fathers deserve the highest commendation for the kindness and liberality which they have ever manifested toward the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids and the little orphans under the Sisters’ charge.

The formative years at St. John’s were sown thick with trials and discouragements. Diocesan collections were not sufficient to pay the running expenses of the institution while the number of dependent children increased rapidly. The Mother’s heart, yearning over these little ones, the weaklings of her Master’s fold, could not bear to see the children in want, and the hearts of her devoted Sisters were equally sympathetic. With the permission of the Bishop and the cordial invitation of the pastors, the Sisters themselves went from house to house in

the country parishes nearby, begging for help to carry on their work.

The hardships endured by these Sisters who volunteered for this collecting "for Christ's little ones" were many. God holds the record and surely their reward will be great. Some of them are reaping that rich reward already, among them our good Sister Paschal. She was a generous soul of heroic courage who went out many a time and oft "begging" for the children of her beloved St. John's. Long will her memory live in the minds and hearts of those for whom she suffered, and in the recollection of the good pastors who witnessed her self-sacrificing deeds.

Others who toiled with Sister Paschal in this corner of God's vineyard are still with us. Sister Mary Adelaide, one of the group who labored so valiantly in those early days, has the privilege still, in her declining years, of extending her motherly care to the orphans of today, as acting Superior of the Home.

Referring to the trials of the opening years, it is remembered that on one occasion when things seemed more depressing than usual on account of lack of funds, Mother Aquinata encouraged the Sisters, spoke to them of God's goodness and mercy, and asked them all to join in a novena to St. Joseph. Mother's confidence in prayer was strong enough to move mountains! None were surprised when, on the evening on which the novena



closed, a stranger came to the Home and presented Mother with a liberal donation. No one knew who the stranger was, nor whence he came!

\* \* \* \* \*

The first year of the history of St. John's was marked by the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of Mother Aquinata's profession. In her humility she wished no display on the occasion, and asked only for a Mass of thanksgiving and the prayers of the Sisters and the orphans. But the Sisters could not let the occasion go by without doing homage to one so deserving as their good Mother. Mother Angela (who later was placed in charge of a foundation in the far West) directed the preparations for this jubilee celebration. Sister Cyprian, Principal of St. Alphonsus School, provided the music for the program and choir. Sister Agatha, later the artist of the Adrian community, designed the decorations. Everyone sought a share in making the day a memorable one in the history of the community.

It was a big surprise that came to Mother on the morning of August twenty-sixth. The little chapel was dressed in festive attire. Everything breathed an atmosphere of peace and happiness. A Pontifical High Mass was arranged for nine o'clock. The Reverend Father McGeough, C.Ss.R., was to give the sermon. Happening to meet Mother that morning, he asked, "What shall I say about you today, Mother?" to which she replied, "Father, do not mention me but preach about the Blesséd Virgin."



Not heeding her request, he opened his sermon by saying, "Twenty-five years ago today, a young maiden of seventeen pronounced her vows for the first time. After a struggle of twenty-five years, she is again prepared to renew the same to the Right Reverend Bishop Richter."

At the close of the ceremony, Mother knelt at the feet of His Lordship and bound herself forever to the work of the diocese.

Had Mother Aquinata not accepted this dedication of purpose, she would have had, without doubt, later on, the distinctive honor of being Mother General of the Eastern Community, the original foundation known as Holy Rosary Convent of New York, Second Street. At the same time she would have been Mother General of the Western Province in Michigan, as well as of a new foundation formed later in the far West.

The proffer of the Eastern Community came some years later (in 1896) when Mother Hyacinth, who as Prioress had succeeded Mother Augustine, died, and Mother Aquinata with a companion went East for the funeral services. At their close, an election took place, and the pioneer Superior, whose work in far-off Michigan had been for many years the pride and delight of the Eastern Sisters, was unanimously elected Mother General.

When this news was communicated to her Sisters in Michigan, young and old were grief-stricken. All protested that the appointment could never be

allowed to go through. Fervent prayers were offered for her return, and the Sisters waited anxiously for further news. Finally two delegates from New York, Mother Angela and Sister Mary Ignatius, came to lay the proceedings of the Chapter before His Lordship. Bishop Richter's decisive answer was, "Mother Aquinata has made her vows to me. She has also arranged with me for a reception and profession this month."

Sadly disappointed, the Sisters returned to New York and related the result of their interview with Bishop Richter. Archbishop Corrigan announced a second election, and Mother Aquinata returned to Grand Rapids where her community received her with great rejoicing.

\* \* \* \* \*

The truth of the saying: "Whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth" was verified again by the epidemic of diphtheria at St. John Home in the year 1892. Forty cases of the dread disease broke out during a period of two months, and several of them proved fatal. The last victim was Sister Mary Isabella, a most promising novice. For her, Mother Aquinata acted as special nurse, remaining day and night by her bedside and allowing no one else to minister to her wants. Sister Isabella, who realized her approaching death, said to Mother a few hours before she died, "Mother, I must go to Heaven to care for our little orphans."

Mother's grief was intense. She loved her Sisters

as she loved the orphans. She prayed, she worked, she suffered. The number of Sisters was not sufficient to care for the sick and to guard the others properly so as to prevent the spread of the disease. All who were not ill were doing double duty. Sister Mary DeSales, in particular, was indefatigable in her labors until all danger of contagion was passed. Although she was not called upon at that time to make the supreme sacrifice of her life, she fell a victim a few years later when God called her Home. She was a woman of exceptional ability, a truly noble character, well tried in the school of the Crucified. Her death was an irreparable loss to the community.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### MOTHER AQUINATA AS FIRST MOTHER GENERAL OF A DIOCESAN COMMUNITY

WITH any extended mention of the development of St. Dominic's Community in Michigan, reference must be made to the Right Reverend Bishop Richter, who holds a leading place in the reverential memory of the Sisterhood. To the casual reader not entirely familiar with conditions, a synopsis of the beloved Bishop's life-work will surely be acceptable. One might truly say he was co-founder with Mother Aquinata, for from the time of his appointment as the first Bishop of Grand Rapids until he passed to his eternal reward, he proved himself a true friend and counselor, a spiritual advisor, a bulwark to the Community.

Born in Neuenkirchen, Oldenburg, April 9, 1838, he came to America as a youth of sixteen. Here he engaged earnestly in the study of the English language, gaining proficiency in a comparatively short time. He attended St. Paul's, St. Xavier's, St. Thomas' at Bardstown, and St. Mary's at Cincinnati. Finally, at the age of twenty-two, he entered the Pontifical College of the United States of America at Rome.<sup>1</sup> There he had the honor of

---

<sup>1</sup> Catholic Vigil, Supplement, 1923-25.



being one of the first students to attend the American College which had been recently established by His Holiness, Pius IX.

These years of his youth, spent in the Eternal City, were ever a source of remembered joy to him, especially in his later years when his physical strength was declining and his life was less active.

On June 10, 1865, he was ordained priest by Cardinal Patrizzi, Vicar of Rome, and then returned to the United States to labor zealously as a teacher at Mt. St. Mary's where he had studied in his boyhood days; later, he became pastor of St. Lawrence's in Cincinnati.

On April 22, 1883, he was consecrated the first Bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, by Coadjutor Bishop Elder, assisted by Bishop Borgess of Detroit, and Bishop McCloskey of Louisville, Kentucky.

Bishop Richter was known and recognized as a man of sound principles and sterling character. No selfish motives ever entered into his decisions. "All for the honor and glory of God," was ever his motto. Under his guidance the work of organization in the diocese went steadily forward. Parishes were established, schools, hospitals, and orphanages erected. The thirty-three years of his administration saw vast changes; saw Grand Rapids, his Episcopal City, forge its way to the front-rank among the cities of the United States in educational lines as well as in religious enterprises, and found Bishop Richter ever

watchful that the highest ideals were inculcated by his priests, sisters and laity. His vigilance was abundantly rewarded. There is nothing more noteworthy in the diocese of Grand Rapids than the thoroughness of the provision that has been made for the spiritual needs of the Catholic people. Viewed from every possible angle, the life work of Bishop Richter redounds to his immortal credit.

In his seventy-eighth year, this noble prelate was called to reap the reward of his useful life. "His was," to quote the words of the Right Reverend Michael James Gallagher, D.D., "a career made glorious by the divine benediction visibly productive of the richest harvest."

The following tributes to his memory are well worthy of presentation: The Reverend John J. McAllister, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, Grand Rapids, writes:

"The passing of Bishop Richter opened up for admiration the life and character of one of the greatest members of the American hierarchy. Of a religious and retiring nature, the good Bishop not only shrank from the glamour and publicity that naturally surrounds the life of public men, but was most alert and cautious to see to it that the divine office and calling of a bishop might appear in a right light in the eyes of his fellow-men. He was the natural product of his day and time. Catholicity was not only unknown but was consid-

ered a menace to the life and institutions of the American people; and therefore, all his undertakings were the result of long and assiduous thought and consideration; and only the very best interests of religion were permitted to be his object.

"His Lordship was of a conservative type; close contact with the man revealed a grandeur of soul and an unselfish nature that few realized or understood. His motto of 'coming like John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord' found him mapping out the territory for the welfare of his people, laying foundations for the splendid school system that has been recognized not only throughout the West but the entire country, and particularly, preparing a priesthood and sisterhood to meet the future requirements of the growth in cities and state.

"Coming here after the Purcell financial disaster in the archdiocese of Cincinnati, he made regulations in the construction of his diocese that were of the severest nature, which often hampered the growth of many of our institutions, but which matured into a prudence that was commendable, and, in this particular case, made for the welfare of his people.

"I had the good fortune to live under the same roof with His Lordship. In the midst of worldly affairs as he was, he saw to it that saintliness should be the distinctive mark of the first bishop. Bishop

Richter was not the popular type that listens to the echo of the rabble to shape a policy or to take a step. Conscience and the Will of God were the two abiding forces that guided the man, and when his career was over and his work in the divine vineyard was at an end, he could lie down like the saints, in peace, and give his soul to his Maker, happy and unafraid. The name of *Richter* will ever remain a benediction to the diocese of his making. His great piety, his zeal and devotion, his interest in the most minute detail of every good work, did not cease with his passing, but still live and remain in the great harvest of souls."

\* \* \* \* \*

After this short digression, we will review some important events in the history of the Dominican Sisters in Michigan—events in which Bishop Richter figured largely.

As a zealous shepherd of souls, His Lordship perceived the growing needs of his diocese. Teachers were in demand to take care of the increasing number of schools. Our still young community was sharing its energies and strength with the neighboring diocese of Detroit. Just when all these problems were confronting the Bishop, a change occurred. The seemingly providential happened. The missions in the Detroit diocese were formed into a separate province, with the Provincialate at St. Joseph's, Adrian.



Bishop Richter, with his keen insight, conceived the idea that a centralized government in the West would be more advantageous for the training of the members of the community, and thus the Dominican Sisters should be better prepared to meet the demands of the diocese. With this end in view, he conferred with Archbishop Corrigan of New York, laying before him the needs of his diocese in all candor and simplicity.

The Archbishop saw at once the advisability of such a move for the good of the Church in the West. Bishop Richter then consulted Mother Hyacinth, Prioress of Holy Rosary Convent, New York, asking for her consideration of the matter, and finally, in his quinquennial visit to Rome, he laid the question before the Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Leo XIII. The Holy Father, cognizant of the Bishop's deep religious spirit and sanctity, after due deliberation, invested him with full authority to organize a diocesan community.

On August 30, 1894, at the close of the Sisters' annual retreat, His Lordship announced that the Dominican Sisters in his diocese would henceforth be a diocesan congregation.

Mother Aquinata, made by this ruling Mother Prioress, took up with heroic courage the new responsibilities thrust upon her by Divine Providence. She trusted and sought her inspiration from the Messiah of Piety, He Who "went about doing



good." This Divine Exemplar was the source of her strength in the unending conflict with every kind of obstacle, and of the cheer and optimism diffused by her very presence. An abiding sense of her stewardship and of the Master's understanding of her needs, penetrated her with the consciousness that all was held in trust; that neither joy nor sorrow were her own, but only transient gifts to be turned to the vast account of that omniscient Master.

She was ever furthered in her plans by her spiritual guide and support, the Right Reverend Bishop Richter. He watched over the growing community with an anxious and zealous eye, and left nothing undone that might be conducive to the utility, strength, and development of his new diocesan community in whose leader he saw every qualification of *a Religious, a Teacher, and a Mother*. He was most solicitous in promoting a true religious spirit among the Sisters, not only by his kindly advice, admonitions, and counsels, but also by the annual canonical visitations through which he demonstrated his paternal interest in each individual Sister.

The Community was still struggling under the Constitutions of the Second Order as observed in the Cloisters of Ratisbon, with such mitigations of the fasts of the Order and other dispensations as were absolutely necessary. Notwithstanding these

modifications, the observance of Constitutions, framed primarily for the fostering of the spirit of prayer and recollection in an atmosphere of seclusion, grew more and more difficult as demands in educational lines increased. It was evident that some radical change must be effected. A fundamental Dominican axiom, dating from the time of St. Dominic, is “. . . remove anything that might impede the success of apostolic labors.” To apply this principle would be much more in accordance with Dominican standards than to continue in the practice of a system no longer adapted to present conditions.

What was needed now was a form of government which should increase the efficiency and promote the spiritual welfare of the Sisters in their teaching and other apostolic labors.

Mother Aquinata, as a true and zealous daughter of St. Dominic, with the welfare of the Community at heart and with the advice of the Ordinary, proceeded at once to negotiate with the Master General of the Order, in Rome, to have the new diocesan congregation affiliated with the great Dominican Order that it might participate in all its spiritual benefits. She also sought other necessary changes to further its work for the honor and glory of God, for the salvation of souls, and the welfare of the Community.

Following are two letters received in answer to Mother's communications:

Via S. Sebastiano, Io.,  
Rome, Italy,  
November 26, 1894.

Reverend Mother Prioress:

The Reverend Master General will forward your request to the Reverend Procurator General of the S. Congregation Episc. et Reg., if you will first send:

1. The number of Sisters; the number of parochial schools under your charge; orphanages; and advanced institutions of learning.

2. Which of the already approved Rules and Constitutions you wish to adopt? There are some of the communities who recite the large breviary and some the *Officium Parvum B. Mariae Virginis*.

The affiliation into the Order and the participation in all the spiritual benefits of the Order are herewith granted you by the Right Reverend Master General from this day forward specifically expressed, and he herewith sends you and all your Sisters his paternal blessing.

Recommending myself and especially the Right Reverend Master General to your prayers, I am,

Your humble

fr. Dom. Mar. Scheer, O. P.,  
Socius Magistri Generalis.<sup>2</sup>

Rome, Italy,  
Dec. 26, 1894.

Reverend Mother Prioress:

A special diploma for the recognition of your Con-

---

<sup>2</sup> Archives at Marywood, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

gregation as being affiliated will not be sent at present, because His Paternity is planning to pronounce a general recognition, with the beginning of the New Year, for all the Sisters in America who are recognized and approved by the Ordinary and are living under the Rule of the Second or Third Order.

This was the practice for the past several centuries and our Right Reverend Master General wishes to abide with the old traditions and practices.

In the love of the Divine Infant, I am,

Yours respectfully,

fr. Dom. Mar. Scheer, O.P.<sup>3</sup>

The transmission of the diploma suffered a delay owing to a change in the administration of the Order and the subsequent promotion of the Master General. The official diploma, dated October 12, 1918, was duly received during the administration of the Most Reverend Louis Theissling, Master General of the Order. It now adorns the wall of the new Motherhouse at Marywood.

Later in the same year, 1894, official approbation was received for the recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin instead of the Divine Office.

Mother Aquinata, in conjunction with the senior Sisters, reviewed several of the approved Constitutions as suggested by the Master General and finally it was decided that the Constitutions of the Sisters of Sinsinawa Mound, with necessary modifications to suit local conditions, were best adapted for the needs of the young community. The Very Reverend

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.





THE LATE RIGHT REVEREND HENRY JOSEPH RICHTER, D.D.  
(1883-1916)  
First Bishop of Grand Rapids, Michigan.





Thomas Esser, O.P., was sojourning in this country at that time and proved of invaluable assistance to Mother in arranging the Constitutions which were submitted to the Ordinary of the diocese, The Right Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, D.D. The Bishop, after carefully reviewing the same and suggesting certain minor changes which he deemed expedient, approved the Constitutions of the Sisters now to be known as "Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart."

In 1897, the first General Chapter was convened at St. John Home, which was the temporary Motherhouse of the Sisters. Mother Aquinata was unanimously elected Mother General. She was re-elected at all subsequent Chapters held until the time of her death.

She, on her part, seemed providentially fitted to cope with the difficulties that at times beset even the best organized communities. She was quick to see the opportunities of the moment and as quick to act, being gifted with indomitable courage and resolution. She was one of those rare souls who united in their natures the highest intuitions of the spiritual order with a genius for the practical. Her manner and her speech bore witness to that serenity of soul whose source of strength was beyond all earthly disquietudes and uncertainties.

The tribute which follows, from the pen of the Spiritual Director of the Dominican Sisters at

Marywood, (the new Motherhouse) is of interest here. The Reverend Joseph J. Vogl writes:

“Among those who helped Bishop Henry Joseph Richter in his divinely imposed task of saving souls, were the daughters of St. Dominic.

“These saintly women had come to Traverse City from New York in 1877. Feeling that it would increase their efficiency, Bishop Richter arranged for the canonical autonomy of the Dominican Sisters residing in his diocese.

“As a consequence, he felt that he had special responsibilities toward them, and in acquitting himself of these responsibilities he found one of his sweetest joys. He was ever at their service and made heroic sacrifices that his spiritual daughters would advance in the path of holiness and the love of souls.”

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY

**N**O one can fathom the love of the Almighty Father for those whom He designs to do His work, or the mystery that shrouds His dealings with them. In the separation of the West from the East—the offshoot from the Motherhouse, the beautiful unity that existed between them was never violated. God, for His own wise purpose, permitted Ecclesiastical Superiors to decree a separation; but the deep mutual love of the Sisters never suffered the least diminution. God's designs were fulfilled as is evidenced by the growth of the sturdy little band of Michigan missionaries.

The Community, during the first period of its existence (1877-1885), had slowly increased in numbers and with the assistance of recruits from the Motherhouse, had gradually extended its field of labor. Since that date, schools had been opened in Pashabatown—an Indian school; in Provemont, now known as Lake Leelanau; in Grand Rapids—St. Alphonsus and St. Joseph's; in Essexville; in Mt. Pleasant; and in Wright. So that at the close of what might be called the formative period, the Community numbered eighty Sisters, who were laboring in thirteen parishes besides caring for the orphanage mentioned heretofore.

With the opening of a new period—the era of expansion—as it may be called, came a large increase in members equipped to carry on the work of Catholic education. Of a surety, the seed sown by the pioneer Sisters was beginning to show fruit. The consecrated soil of Michigan was bearing choicest blooms, and in the apostolic field of St. Dominic, there seemed no dearth of earnest laborers to tend the harvest.

The zealous Bishop Richter, alive to the spiritual dangers threatening the children of his flock who were obliged to tend the public schools where no mention of God is heard, was most urgent in his demand that every parish should found its Catholic school at the earliest opportunity, and his pastors were prompt in their acquiescence. Their parishoners, the majority of whom were poor, were compelled, then as now, to contribute to the support of the public schools. The erection and maintenance of parochial schools involved heavy outlays. Therefore, pastors questioned: "Where shall we find, reliable, competent, and frugal teachers for our parochial schools?" Mother Aquinata's little community answered these demands.

The readiness of the Sisters and their willingness to meet such conditions encouraged confessors to direct to the temporary Motherhouse at St. John's, those fervent souls who sought priestly advice in choosing a religious community. All this was evidence of a special blessing from above. By the



Spirit of God the religious vocation is aroused, and with the call there is usually united an attraction for a particular order. Hence it was the Voice of the Lord Himself which sent scores of maidens to the Novitiate to be trained for the cultivation of His vineyard. The development of Catholic life and faith in the United States is something momentous and glorious, and in His merciful kindness, the Master has allowed the daughters of St. Dominic to contribute their mite towards the in-gathering of the vintage of souls.

In 1899, the nucleus of our present Motherhouse, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus—now a monument to the City of Grand Rapids—took inception in what was then a private dwelling, on the corner of Fountain and Ransom Streets. Mother Aquinata, with that undaunted spirit which was one of her chief characteristics, arranged at once for the remodeling of the building with the intention of beginning school in September. School accessories were purchased, plans drawn up for the opening of an academy, with grade and kindergarten departments for the first years at least.

Among the many noble benefactors of those days when the struggling community needed loyal support, none is more deserving of credit than the late Father John A. Schmitt. He not only gave generously of material help, but with his own hands labored daily to get all in a suitable condition for the opening of school, relieving Mother Aquinata of

much responsibility. In fact, to all the clergy of the Cathedral parish, the Sisters are indebted for many signal favors and untiring interest. On the Friday before the opening of school one of the clergy asked, "Do you mean to tell me that you will open school here on Monday?" The ready response was, "We surely do." And they did!

Sister Albertina was appointed Superior, and together with Sister Benedicta, who later became Mother General, (1917-1927) and Sisters Adelaide, Sylvester, and Borromeo, opened school.

The attendance during the first year was not large, numbering only thirteen pupils, but a beginning was made, and God's blessing was on the work. (Here it may be mentioned that the Reverend Hugh O'Donnel, C.S.C., of Notre Dame, and his brother, Frank, now a prominent physician in Alpena, belonged to the exclusive "thirteen.")

The Academy flourished to such an extent that before two years it was found necessary to provide more adequate accommodations. An annex was then added which in time became the Academy proper. Mother Aquinata watched with anxious eye the infant growth of what she considered the "mustard tree" in the branches of which her future Community must needs find shelter.

With each succeeding term the number of students has increased and year after year graduates from the Academy have entered higher institutions of learning—Trinity College, Washington;

St. Mary's, Indiana; and Michigan University, with which the Academy has been affiliated since March 21, 1906. Honors of graduation were afforded students in Academic courses but the Department of Music kept pace as well. All this was a source of jubilation to Mother Aquinata.

The guiding spirit of the institution during all the years of its growth was our saintly Bishop Richter of blessed memory. He watched over this ever increasing foundation with the heart of a father, sympathized with the Sisters in times of trial and vicissitude, rejoiced with them in their successes, taking special interest in the student body.

Through his frequent informal visits, he came to know each student individually. Nothing gave him more pleasure than to spend an hour or two each week instructing them in their religion. This labor of love he continued until a week before his death.

With the passing of years came such an increase in enrollment that by 1915, the year of our saintly Mother Aquinata's death, the Sisters realized that old Sacred Heart Academy could no longer harbor all who sought entrance. Then, too, the Motherhouse which up to this date had been maintained in conjunction with St. John Orphanage had proved unsatisfactory. Mother Aquinata's desire for the Motherhouse which her foresight deemed a necessity for her growing Community is clearly expressed in the letter quoted below (dated from Grand Rapids, Dec. 27, 1913):

Dear Sisters :

In order to obtain for our community the special blessing, help, and protection of the Sacred Heart, the Sisters in every house will take the Sacred Heart for the Patron of their house for 1914. Every evening, then, after Night Prayer, you will say the enclosed prayer to the Sacred Heart for this intention.

*Furthermore, as our community grows, the need of a Motherhouse proper is being felt more and more. We must, therefore, unite in fervent prayer for means and ways to obtain one in the near future.* The enclosed prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, Our Holy Father St. Dominic, and the Holy Souls, are to be said every evening for this intention (not as heretofore for vocations or the novitiate).

However, as prayer without mortification is of little avail, the Sisters will also keep a black fast on Saturday, January 3, 1914. Take for breakfast a cup of black coffee or tea with a roll or piece of bread; for dinner and supper, some fresh boiled or canned fish, potatoes, fresh, dried or canned fruit and vegetables, bread and black tea or coffee; but nothing coming from animals, such as eggs, butter, lard, cheese, milk may be taken.

Praying God to bless us all, and to make these prayers and fasts efficacious to His greater honor and our own sanctification, I am, dear Sisters,

Faithfully yours in the Sacred Heart,

Sister M. Aquinata, O.S.D.<sup>1</sup>

M. G.

---

<sup>1</sup>Until October, 1927, it had been customary for Dominican Sisters of the Third Order to use the initials O.S.D. after their religious name. Since that time, however, they have affixed O.P. The following is the authority for the change. Taken from Section on, "Means for Fostering Mutual Relations," Part II, paragraph 4, of the First Circular Letter of the Most Reverend Father Bonaventure Garcia de Paredes, Master General of the Dominican Order; given

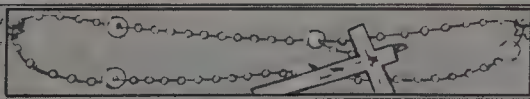




**OLD SACRED HEART ACADEMY  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**



**HOLY ROSARY ACADEMY  
BAY CITY, MICHIGAN**







In the short space of two years the long cherished wish of Mother Aquinata was realized in the purchase of a beautiful site, the breaking of ground and the foundation of the present magnificent edifice, Sacred Heart College, Academy and Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart! Because of the extensive and beautiful grove situated on the property, it bears the truly symbolic title, "Marywood."

It was during the time of the late Right Reverend Edward D. Kelly, D.D., that this building was brought to completion. To him and to Mother Mary Benedicta and her co-laborers are due gratitude and acknowledgement.

No sooner was old Sacred Heart Academy on a solid footing, and everything pointing to success than Mother Aquinata opened its sister institution, Holy Rosary Academy, Bay City.

Prior to 1908, each parish in the city of Grand Rapids had maintained a separate high school. Bishop Richter, with the far-seeing eye of a real educator, visioned the great good sure to accrue from the centralization of a high school faculty and

---

<sup>1</sup>—Continued

at Rome, December 25, 1926. "That all the Institutes of the Regular Third Order whether of Pontifical or Diocesan right which have already obtained or shall in future obtain the Decree of affiliation to the Order, may use in their documents the seal proper to our Order together with the emblems proper to each Institute. Likewise, all the Sisters belonging to these Institutes may add to their own name and surname the words significative of the Order, namely: Order of Preachers, or simply the letters O.P., signing themselves thus: Sister N.N.. O.P.

student body. When his plans had materialized, he entrusted to Mother Aquinata and her community the education of the girls. Sacred Heart Academy not being overcrowded at the time, Mother Aquinata offered to take care of the girls there until other arrangements could be made.

The boys were provided for at St. Andrew's then under the direction of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. During that year and the year following, great demands were made on the community. No less than ten large schools were opened. In fact, from the year 1905 on, expansion was so rapid that at times it seemed well-nigh impossible to take care of the situation, but Mother Aquinata had the faculty of finding a way out of any difficulty, and she always managed to adjust her resources to the demands made upon them.

God's blessing on the community provided for it each year energetic young souls to carry on the work and replace the nuns who had sacrificed their lives in the performance of duty in the cause of Christian education. Truly has the Most Reverend Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis said: "The work of education requires greater sacrifice and higher consecration of purpose than devotion to a life of charity in the alleviation of bodily suffering. After all, charity in this significance of caring for souls, teaching the poor in spiritual things to know God, was the special work of the Lord on earth."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Minogue, *A Hundred Years of Dominican History*, p. 155.

In 1914, the Sisters of Charity withdrew from St. Andrew School and Mother Aquinata was requested to assume charge of it, together with the Boys' Catholic Central. This was the last school Mother opened. She realized that it was a big undertaking on account of the constant drain on the community, but as always, putting her confidence in God, she accepted the trust.

It was on the feast of our Holy Father, St. Dominic, the very day of Mother's Golden Jubilee celebration, that the Sisters took possession of the mission house. How anxious Mother was!

Again, the day school opened in September, Mother was there, anxiously awaiting the Sisters' reports after enrollment was over. If there ever was a time when she seemed more concerned than another, it was now. It would appear as though she realized that this was to be the acme of all her endeavors.

When Mother Aquinata laid down the burden and gave an account of her work to her Lord and Master, her community numbered nearly four hundred Sisters, had charge of forty-two parish schools, two central high schools, two academies and one orphanage! Certainly a fair start toward the fulfillment of Mother Augustine's vision of that, "fair peninsula dotted white"—the vision whose realization many of her devoted daughters have been spared to see.

Of the pioneer six, however, who first came to

Traverse City, only one remains, Mother Boniface, who is still active. Three are resting in the cemetery of their first mission; Mother Aquinata was one of the last to pass to her eternal reward. Mother Camilla, who became the Mother General of the Adrian Community, survived her but eight years.





THE MOTHERHOUSE, SACRED HEART COLLEGE AND ACADEMY  
Marywood, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mother's Dream.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### MOTHER AQUINATA AS RELIGIOUS, SUPERIOR, AND EDUCATOR

“**A**D Majorem Dei Gloriam,” the watchword of the elect in all ages, seems most aptly to sum up the life of Mother Aquinata in religion. A woman of deep piety, hers was a spiritual nature, and in this spirituality you have the keynote of her life. She lived peacefully in uninterrupted communion with her Creator. She seemed to have the power of transforming a day of a thousand activities into one of unbroken prayer and adoration. As the writer looks back over a stretch of twenty years or more, there is a beautiful memory of Mother kneeling motionless in the convent chapel, her eyes fixed intently on the Tabernacle, or with rosary in hand, walking back and forth in the corridor, praying. A constant source of edification to the Sisters was to come upon her, as they did almost daily, finishing the Way of the Cross when they entered the chapel for morning prayer.

Search deeply as you will the character of Mother Aquinata, examine minutely every detail of her conduct, and you will find that this quiet, uninterrupted communing with God explains everything that counted in her life—her humility, her patience, her zeal for God and souls, her absolute

unselfishness, her spirit of sacrifice, her charity, her boundless love for her Sisters and her community.

In promoting the spiritual welfare of the community, Mother, realizing as she did that religious who devote themselves to the strenuous work of education must of necessity, because of their contact with seculars, be exposed to many dangers, provided annually for her Sisters a spiritual retreat where ample opportunity was afforded them to renew their zeal, and to find, far from the distractions of their daily work, new strength and inspiration in close communion with the things of God.

At the close of this yearly retreat, each Sister was given the privilege of a personal visit with Mother, from whose mere presence she went forth strengthened and encouraged for the trials of the coming year. How our Senior Sisters look back to those precious moments so spent! Can you not close your eyes even now, dear Senior Sister, and feel Mother lovingly adjusting your collar as she imparted to you news of some cross you were expected to bear with serenity and holy joy?

The sick and suffering were ever the object of her special attention and consideration. Nothing was too good for a suffering Sister. She saw to it that the ill and infirm were given the best of care, and many a Sister was nursed back to health and strength by the ministrations of Mother's own hands.

A remarkable incident took place on one occasion

when one of the Sisters required an operation. Operations were not as common then as now, and Mother, fearing that this one meant almost certain death, summoned the Sisters to the Chapel and there with outstretched arms, knelt for hours before the Tabernacle, begging God to spare the life of the Sister if it were His holy will.

The Sister was already on the operating table when a warning was given to the doctors to desist. The life of the Sister was spared, and she has since spent more than twenty-five years of useful service in God's vineyard as a consequence of the persevering prayer of saintly Mother Aquinata.

Another almost similar occurrence took place when within ten weeks a Sister was returning to the hospital for the third operation for cancer. Although the case was despaired of in-so-far as human help was concerned, Mother Aquinata's strong faith and confidence in prayer were not to be shaken. It was the time when Blessed Joan of Arc was about to be canonized. Mother ordered a novena in her honor in all the houses of the community, and a novena of Masses at the Motherhouse for the intention of the sufferer. The Sister is still living after fourteen years or more, and enjoying excellent health. Truly, the faith of Mother Aquinata was a faith "to move mountains."

What a feeling of happiness welled up in the hearts of the Mission Sisters when word reached them of her coming, however short the stay might



be; but also what a host of inward misgivings as to whether *all was well*, for it was a known fact that Mother would examine the drawers, the shelves, and all the household belongings. Things superfluous were sure to be relegated to more useful spheres for holy poverty was sacred with her, and she wished to inculcate that virtue in the hearts of her Sisters.

Mother Aquinata imitated the Hidden Life in her love of humble labors and occupations. In the early years of her Superiorship, before the cares of her office multiplied, she took great pleasure in participating in any and all manual labor of the house. During the first years, too, she taught school daily, and for a long period gave instructions in French in the higher classes.

Her accessibility was one of her most prominent distinctions. She had a true Mother's love for her spiritual daughters and a special interest in each one. She shared with them their joys and sorrows, being interested not only in the Sister herself but also in each member of her family. How consoling it was for the Sisters, separated from home and family, when Mother, visiting at the missions, would inquire for their relatives, asking for each by name, and seeming never to forget! In this and in other details, her memory was marvelous.

But while Mother Aquinata was of a most amiable disposition, she had at the same time an inflexible will when a question of right or justice

<sup>+</sup>  
J. M. J. D.

Gr. Rapids, Dec. 17, '13.

Dear Sister:

A very joyful and blessed  
Christmas to you and the Sisters! Let us  
unite in humble prayer to our Infant  
Saviour to bless us all each one in parti-  
cular and the whole community in general.  
May we all strive to become more and more  
pleasing to Him; may He be merciful to  
us and help us in our many needs both  
spiritual and temporal.

Pray for me too at the Crib of Bethlehem  
and believe me

Yours faithfully in Xt,  
Sr. M. Agnicha C.S.D.



was concerned. The Rule of the Congregation was sacred to her and anything that savored of laxity in regard to its observance was corrected with firmness, even with severity if occasion required.

Her Sisters knew that their ideals must be of the highest type if they were to be approved of by her. One must not infer, however, that she did not have the greatest patience with faults committed through human frailty; on the contrary she was most sympathetic with the weak and erring. Her one desire was to help them, to raise them up, to support them.

She had a powerful mind and wonderful executive ability, inherited probably from her father, who had, years before, opposed her entrance into religion because he believed her to possess the attributes that made for success in the business world of his day, chief among them being unusual executive ability.

Prudence also was one of her most pronounced traits. She never acted until every aspect of the case in point had been considered, and no motive of personal interest, personal friendship, or the contrary, could bias her decisions.

The Reverend Joseph J. Vogl, present spiritual director and chaplain of the Motherhouse, says in speaking of her attributes:

"Some of the chief characteristics of Mother Aquinata I learned from the lips of none less than the saintly pioneer missionary of Michigan, the late

Reverend George Laugel, (†December 14, 1925, Paris, France) who himself had an insatiable thirst for souls. It was he who traveled on horseback and on foot in quest of a scattered flock and ministered to the spiritual needs of those who blazed the trail through Michigan's forests. He could appreciate, as only a missionary can, the spirit of sacrifice and the love of souls that brought the little band of Dominican Sisters from the Eastern Metropolis to the sparsely settled country about Traverse Bay.

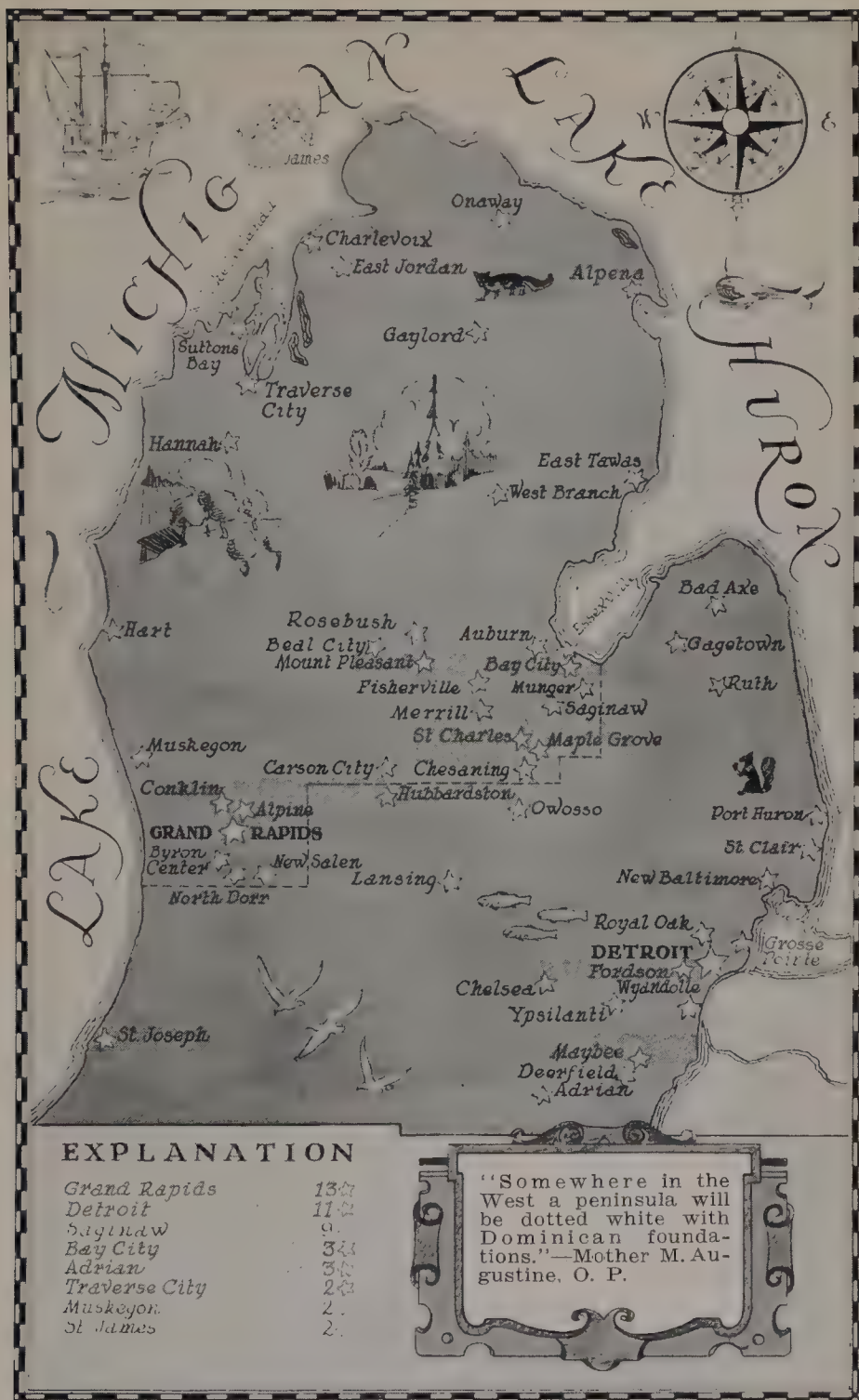
"Among that band of devoted women was Sister Mary Aquinata, who afterwards became the first Prioress of her community in what is now the diocese of Grand Rapids. For her, no obstacle was insurmountable, no sacrifice too great. Buoyed by the courage of a saint, the zeal of a missionary, the heroism of a martyr, she went ever onward and forward to till the virgin soil and sow the seed of Christian education.

"Her spirit of self-sacrifice, her unbounded confidence in God, her intense love for the youth of the land, were an inspiration to her Sisters to whom she was a loving Mother as well.

"That God was pleased with her endeavors and blessed her efforts is evidenced by the marvelous growth and development of her community, which today is a potent factor in the field of Christian education in Michigan, Wisconsin, and New Mexico.

"Mother Aquinata bequeathed to her community







a precious heritage; the spirit of sacrifice, zeal for souls, love for the Church, the example of regular observance—a heritage that will preserve in her spiritual daughters the memory and the lofty ideals of their saintly Mother.”

Mother Mary Eveline, O.P., our fourth and present Mother General, was trained from early girlhood by our beloved Foundress, and has brought to her administration the same spirit that characterized our intrepid Mother Aquinata. Mother Eveline writes of her:

“‘Who shall find a valiant woman.’” —Prov. 31, 10.

“Our Foundress, Mother Mary Aquinata, was a valiant woman. To my mind she had every characteristic of a strong man that would grace a woman as well. She was fitted by nature for the great task of her life—to govern, but her God-given prerogatives were so fostered by cooperation with grace that she became, indeed, a great power to prosper her congregation, secure the religious education of hundreds of our children in this country, and thus promote the welfare of Holy Church in America.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Mother Aquinata’s educational ideals deserve special space and mention. She believed and acted upon her belief that the true aim of education is to combine the cultivation of the intellect with the formation of the moral character and the direction of

the spiritual life, so that each faculty of body, mind, and soul shall be in the highest degree trained and fitted to fulfill the purpose for which God endowed us with it.

Education can be termed "true" or "false" in the proportion in which the above aim is reached. An education that quickens the intelligence, but fails to develop the will and direct it in the practice of virtue may produce scholars, but it cannot form good men. Education, however, which embraces the element of religion brings with it the spirit of self-sacrifice, the willingness to do for others, a tolerance towards opponents, and a feeling of friendship towards all.

In the life and achievements of Mother Aquinata, we witness the wonderful manner in which God raises up, from time to time, human instruments which are to serve some definite purpose. Mother was one who had been endowed with wisdom and vision far ahead of her own day. She planned so wisely that her sound principles of education and the pedagogical methods she adopted for the training of her teaching Sisterhood have stood the test of modern progress and experiments in the schools of today.

She believed that true Christian teachers, as she willed and hoped her Sisters would be, must themselves be taught to follow the Divine Model. Her desire was to see organized a body of teachers according to the mind of the Divine Master, remem-

bering that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Herself a Dominican in every aspiration, and desiring to foster in the hearts of her Sisters the same veneration for the spirit of her beloved Order, she always maintained the high Dominican ideal as expressed in the chosen motto: "Laudare, Benedicere, Praedicare"—to praise, to bless, and to teach, to seek and to spread the truth.

Her aim was to direct the efforts of the sisterhood into one mighty stream that should sweep away the be-setting errors of the day and make straight the ways so that the truths of salvation might be within the reach of all.

And we who are privileged to review the results of her work twelve years after her death can certify that even this short decade of years has seen her purpose accomplished. Considering conditions as they are now, and contrasting them with those that existed when Mother Aquinata first came to Michigan, none can deny how visibly progress has rewarded her efforts.

Let us recall for a moment those pioneer days when with her small band of teaching Sisters she began the great work of establishing schools in the diocese. The very humblest quarters in buildings not usable for modern purposes often formed the nucleus for the flourishing schools of today. During these first years no payment at all, or a very limited sum barely sufficient for their actual needs, was the only material recompense for their labors.



But despite the rude surroundings of these early schools, the Sisters managed to impress their pupils by introducing little customs and devotions into the daily routine of school life. From the present writer's own experience as a child in school, the memory remains that the children of that day regarded the Sisters more as "angels" than as women of "flesh and blood."

Mother Aquinata's frequent visits to the struggling missions were red-letter days of comfort and encouragement to the Sisters. And always the children were accorded the treat of a visit from Mother in their classrooms. Only the Master of the Vineyard knows the countless number of vocations that materialized from little seeds thus sown in her brief intercourse with the little ones on such occasions.

With her customary clearness of vision, she foresaw that in the coming years the summer holidays of the teaching Sisters must be devoted to study, so from the earliest years advanced instruction courses were arranged for the Sisters during the months of July and August, under learned professors brought in from various colleges.

Another step taken to insure progressive educational measures was the establishment, in 1910, of the Novitiate Normal, with Sister Mary Benedicta as Supervisor. Here, in addition to their religious training, the novices were fitted for the exacting and important mission-work of the future.

In 1912, a long cherished wish of Mother's was



THE RIGHT REVEREND MICHAEL JAMES GALLAGHER, D.D.  
Bishop of Grand Rapids, Michigan (1917-1919)  
Now Bishop of Detroit



accomplished through the intervention of Divine Providence. It had ever been Bishop Richter's desire to provide the Sisters with an able spiritual director, and its fulfillment came in March of that year with the appointment of the Reverend Michael James Gallagher, now Bishop of Detroit, to that position.

At that time, Father Gallagher was in poor health, and the Bishop wisely thought that the quiet surroundings of the Motherhouse would be helpful for him, while at the same time the Sisters' spiritual interests would be advanced. The Novitiate had been transferred from Traverse City to St. John's, Grand Rapids, so that the novices and postulants had the privilege of attending classes in Philosophy, as well as in Latin and Greek, conducted by Father Gallagher. That he was untiring in this new field of forming characters, training intellect, and guiding those who were destined to spread afar the knowledge learned from him, is confirmed by the many fortunate Sisters who came under his fatherly guidance during those years. Mother Aquinata and the Sisters deeply appreciated his assistance, and to this day he is gratefully remembered and esteemed by the Dominican Sisters in the diocese of Grand Rapids.





## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE GOLDEN ROSARY OF YEARS

MOTHER MARY AQUINATA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION  
1864-1914

"Thou shalt sanctify the Fiftieth Year, and shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of the land, for it is the year of Jubilee." —Lev. XXV. 10.

---

**C**ELEBRATION, as the word is understood, means always the revival of memories, a review of events that at the time of their happening were as landmarks on the roadway of life for an individual or group of individuals immediately concerned.

Since such events have, later on, come to affect many who might have been considered far removed from their original orbit, the anniversary celebration assumes an importance undreamt of at the time of happening.

Surely of import and joy to many was the four days' festival (August 4 to 8, 1914) whereby the Sisters of St. Dominic at Grand Rapids marked the great occasion of the Golden Jubilee of their Venerable Mother General, whose career we have sought to follow in these pages from the far-away day when with happy heart she donned the humble

habit of St. Dominic's daughters, and acquired the significant name of Sister Mary Aquinata. No pains were spared to make memorable this *Fiftieth Year*.

For long months ahead her Community and Novitiate, representatives of high schools and academies she had founded, and the orphaned little ones—dearest of all to that maternal heart because most helpless and dependent—all of these vied each with the other in efforts to honor her whom they revered as one of God's chosen instruments: her efforts and her achievements they, in their varied lines, might be considered to represent.

August the fourth of 1914 dawned an ideal day, all white and blue and gold, as if St. Dominic himself had besought superlative charm for this, his feast day that was to see the opening of the Jubilee. In keeping with the loveliness of nature that day, was the beauty of St. John Home which had been wonderfully transformed and adorned by loving hands until it presented a perfect setting for the great event.

At nine o'clock Pontifical High Mass was sung, and because we know how all who participated shared in the spirit of the Jubilee, their names are here preserved: The celebrant was the Right Reverend Henry Joseph Richter, D.D.; the Arch-Priest, the Right Reverend Michael James Gallagher, D.D.; the Deacons of Honor, the Reverend R. Van Rooy, O. Praem., and the Reverend Joseph Bauer; the Deacons of the Mass, the Reverend Edward K.

Cantwell, C.Ss.R., and the Reverend John G. Wyss; the Masters of Ceremonies, the Reverend Charles White, D.D. (now Bishop of Spokane), and the Reverend John J. McAllister.

The Jubilee sermon was delivered by the Provincial—the Very Reverend James R. Meagher, O.P., S.T.L., of Washington, D. C., and was followed by Papal Benediction and the Jubilee Ceremony, the latter carried out according to the Dominican Rite, a very dignified and beautiful ceremony.

At one o'clock an elaborate banquet was tendered the bishops and priests at St. John's. A truly artistic program by the Alumnae of Sacred Heart Academy, followed by Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closed the ceremonies of the Fourth.

On the following day the Alumnae of the Girls Catholic High, invoking the aid of the Angel Guardian of the Jubilarian and her Confreres, united to render a program worthy of their dearly loved Mother.

“Angels are guarding us night and day;  
Angels attend us tho' far we may stray;  
Angels protect us while we sleep,  
And unto life's close their kind watch keep.”

In the Jubilee Pageant then presented, these celestial messengers and “guardians of all our ways” were represented as speaking in the tongue of earth—angelic references to one so long and so intimately identified with Catholic effort as reli-

gious, teacher, and leader, so that the audience might recognize in the rendition of the play, the important role these heavenly witnesses had played in the life of Mother Aquinata as portrayed.

A lovely thought it was, and easily understood by those who knew the beloved Jubilarian best, to represent the Angels of the Records as interested in her anniversary. Angel Recorders of Kind Thoughts, Kind Words, Kind Deeds of universal charity—well might they be pictured as smiling above the golden scrolls where Mother Aquinata's record showed so fair through the passing decades!

The Community, in a program given by its members, sought expression for their love, loyalty, and veneration in music, poetry, and song. And the Novitiate, the youngest unit of Mother's spiritual children, was not to be outdone. The offering of the Novices was a beautiful allegory: "*The Golden Rosary of Years*" in which the Guardian Angel of the Jubilarian, assisted by the Angel of the School, the Angel of the Community, the Recording Angel, and the Angel of the Five Decades, portrayed the entire work of Mother's Golden Rosary of Years.

So much real jubilation! So much heartsome celebration! And yet, none but those who had lived intimately with Mother Aquinata understood what it cost her that day to forsake her accustomed retirement, to be drawn from the seclusion she loved and sought, to be made the unwilling recipient of so much honor and praise. She gave expression of her



feelings some days afterwards, likening herself to "the sacrificial victim of the Old Law, who, bedecked with wreaths and laurels, is led to the Altar of Sacrifice." Very evidently she had a presentiment that the last call of the Master which she must answer, was near at hand. And, indeed, just nine months to the day from that August ceremonial, the brilliant strains of "*Jubilate Deo*" were changed into the wailing notes of the "*Dies Irae!*"

But no such thought clouded the brilliance of St. Dominic's Feast for the myriad admirers of his dedicated daughter who in the role of Jubilarian entered that day the chapel of St. John's, preceded by a Religious bearing a crown on a silver plate! All according to the dignified and beautiful ritual of her order.

The chronicler who would fain give the story of the day in its completeness might well understand the phrase so often used regarding "the embarrassment of riches." A suggested solution of the writer's difficulty would be to include here the transcript in full of the Novitiate's offering which, under the title: "*A Golden Rosary of Years*," presented what was really a synopsis of Mother Aquinata's career, told in the sequence of decades, with Angels as Scribes and Witnesses. And the fascinating record ran from that hour in the fatherland when:

"From the baptismal font a little child  
Was borne in robes all spotless—beautiful,"



to this, the day of Jubilee, when the babe of long ago had become to her loving children in the Faith:

“Theirs by the sacred ties that hold  
The bond of the Cross and the Altar.  
A mother beloved a hundred fold  
Whose record the Angels write in gold  
While words on our weak tongues falter.”

Presented in its entirety, this offering of the Novitiate would read, to those who have borne us company so far, like a poetic resumé of the preceding pages, for each phase of the life which we have sought to portray is set forth, the arduous, eventful life so happily described as blending the work of Mary and Martha.

Temptation to quote is strong upon us as we glance through the verses descriptive of “changes wrought in fifty years” for fifty years ago the trailing pine, the hickory and walnut graced the glens where now school and shrine have risen, and “convent bells peal forth each morn to turn our thoughts above.”

With all such thoughts forever blend their memories—the memories of Dominic’s little band who, “venturing midst toil and care and strife, planted his standard in this distant land.”

And foremost among them must ever stand as our valiant woman, this beloved Jubilarian, to honor whom so many gathered on the soil of that peninsula of promise, in the golden August days of nineteen fourteen!

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE CLOSE OF A WELL-SPENT LIFE

“No longer grieving for her love  
Joy now o’erflows her faithful heart!  
Eternal Anthems hymned above,  
And pure delight her blessed part.”

—From Vesper Hymn of St. Rose’s Feast.

**I**N the earthly life of our Lord we know that Good Friday followed Palm Sunday, and such is the experience of many chosen souls who follow in His footsteps. In the Providence of God it was ordained that before the rejoicing echoes of Jubilee Year had quite died upon our ears, deepest sorrow should be our community’s portion.

The fiftieth anniversary year of Mother Aquinata’s reception opened with joyous ceremony, but before its ending there was to be another opening—this time of the “Gates Ajar” leading to the Father’s Mansions, and her Jubilee Year was to close in that other world of recompense and fruition.

In December, 1914, Mother was taken ill with the dread disease, cancer. All local help failing to effect a cure, finally in January, 1915, she consented to go to Chicago for treatment. There she underwent a critical operation while her community waited anxiously for news of her condition from her traveling companion and nurse, Sister Mary Paschal.

At last the news came. The crisis was over. Mother had conquered in spite of her advanced age. The hearts of her children in Michigan beat high with hope, and many were the prayers of thanksgiving that sped heavenward.

Then came word that the doctors had ordered a change of climate, and Mother must journey Southward. How the longing to see her once more grew in every heart that loved her! But only a few of the older Sisters enjoyed the privilege of a visit before her departure from Chicago. On February 24, Mother and Sister Paschal left for San Antonio, Texas.

Safely arrived in that historic old city, and admitted to the Hospital Santa Rosa, they gave themselves up to enjoyment of the beautiful scenery and climate which it was hoped would prove beneficial to the beloved invalid.

For ten days only was Mother permitted to enjoy the mild air and warm sunshine so helpful in her weakened condition. Then a change of weather, such as had not been witnessed by the inhabitants in twenty years, occurred. The ground was covered with freshly fallen snow; the air became cold and bitter. On the same day, the eighth of March, Mother suffered a relapse and was obliged to return to bed with what she thought might be a severe attack of rheumatism.

Mother Aquinata mentions this in one of her last letters. It was addressed to the present writer and

is her most cherished possession. It reads as follows:

San Antonio, Texas, 3-31-15.

Dear Sister:

You must know ere this that I was not able to write owing to a severe attack of rheumatism that laid me up over three weeks. I am not over it yet. And since the South does not agree with me, we shall leave here, maybe the 8th, prox., first going to Chicago to see the Doctor at Mercy Hospital, and then return home as soon as we can.

Trusting you and the Sisters are well, and will have a holy and peaceful Eastertide, and with love to all, I remain,

Affectionately yours,

Mother.

Suffering severely, yet resigned to God's Holy Will, Mother remained in that distant Southland, tenderly cared for by her faithful companion. All this time, desiring to spare her Sisters the pangs of suspense, Mother did not allow word of her true condition to be forwarded until Good Friday. Then were the hearts of her Sisters deeply disturbed and grieved. The watch at the Sepulchre brought vividly to their minds premonition of the agony that they were soon to be called upon to endure.

Though despaired of by her doctors, Mother still had hopes of recovery and eagerly looked forward to reaching her Michigan home. Mingled feelings of joy and sadness were experienced by those who met her on her arrival from the South, April 8, 1915.

“When hearts speak, no words are needed,” and so it was that day. Silent looks spoke louder than words. Mother was reunited to her community in that dear Home named for the beloved disciple, where she had been Mother, not only to her Sisters, but to the helpless orphans as well for so many years.

Tender hands ministered unto her, even as she had so often ministered to them; grieving hearts suffered in her suffering. Devoted love made every sacrifice a privilege, and moments eagerly snatched from the busy routine of community life to be spent with her, were precious as jewels and never to be forgotten. Sisters came in daily from the mission houses to pay tribute to the stricken Superior, eager to receive her parting words of comfort, or to glean some spiritual remembrance of her.

One and all, they found her bowed in complete resignation to the Will of Heaven, bearing her Cross with a fervor and a fortitude that carried her serenely through the most distressing and painful periods.

For only three weeks was Mother Aquinata destined to comfort her community with her bodily presence. During this time she delivered the following exhortation to which many of the Sisters listened:

“My dear Sisters, do not go into the world; have nothing to do with its gossip, its seeming grandeur nor its styles and fashions, but bring the world to



you by your goodness and exhortations; attract it by your example of a truly Christian life, a life in conformity with evangelical counsels, and then by your contact with those children who in later years must needs mingle with the world, you will elevate their tastes and teach them to reduce to practice the Gospel precepts, by which means alone peace is preserved in the family, the basis of society, and thus peace and union may be preserved among nations. Do this, and the work entrusted to your care will continue to be a subject of joy to men and angels."

Mother's lifelong habit of forgetfulness of self and solicitude for others exhibited itself in all her actions during these closing days. Ill as she was, one of her last acts was to have finishing touches put on the revised Constitutions, then almost complete, which had engaged her attention for months previous to her fatal illness.

Satisfied at length that every word breathed forth the spirit of the Holy Founder, and that her Order was thus safeguarded from all danger, she dictated a letter<sup>1</sup> to the Reverend Thomas Esser, O.P. It reads as follows:

"We are now progressing steadfastly and peacefully. At present we are getting our Constitutions ready for the press. We regret, however, that we could not arrange matters with our Right Reverend

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter written by Sister M. Seraphica, present Bursar General of the Community.

Ordinary as planned ; therefore, we will have to leave matters as they stand. We sincerely hope that in the near future some opportunity may present itself to obtain Papal Approbation."

The last ardent wish of our dying Mother to obtain papal approbation for her community, expressed in this letter but nine days before she gave an account of her life work, must, indeed, have been her first request when she beheld her loving Spouse. That this petition was pleasing to His Sacred Heart is manifest in the whole-hearted approval of her plan by the late Right Reverend Edward Dionysius Kelly, D.D., the third Bishop of Grand Rapids. When conditions seemed ripe, he encouraged the Sisters to petition the Holy See to make them an Institute of Pontifical right. Before the Constitutions, however, could be approved, His Lordship was called to his eternal reward, mourned for by the Community that realized only too well what his interest had meant.

During the short time that our present Bishop, the Right Reverend Joseph Gabriel Pinten, D.D., has had the care of the diocese, the Sisters have come to realize that his fatherly solicitude will leave nothing undone to bring to his spiritual daughters every advantage and blessing. In the great plan of God, it will be his influence and interest that will bring to fruition the prayers and hopes of our beloved foundress, and the long cherished desire of her community. It is in this, our Golden Jubilee

Year, that we have received His Lordship's kind assurance to this effect.

A few days before Mother departed this life, she called her Sisters together, many of them being assembled from all parts of the diocese, and with evidence of deep feeling, addressed to them her farewell words of wisdom:

"Dear Sisters: Be ye good and pious; observe your holy Rule and Constitutions; observe holy obedience. Never say, 'This Sister was with me in the Novitiate—I am not going to obey her.' Nor must you obey only such as are clever, learned, esteemed or good; that would not be true religious obedience. One must obey also such as are not learned—the awkward, the lowly and the ignorant. This is true obedience.

"Observe holy poverty. Up to this, I feel it has not been practiced as it should. Poor people in the world practice it more than we do.

"Love holy purity; do not entertain any special friendships or attachments; also avoid all aversions. Never say, 'I like this one but I cannot bear that one.' O, how our Divine Lord is offended by such conduct. Give your heart to Him alone!

"Endeavor to do all you can to spread our holy Order; you will, thereby, render a good service to God, Who will bless you for it and give you many graces, which you have deserved a thousand times more than I. This is not the work of man, it is the work of God; not through me but through God it

has been accomplished. Observe, then, your holy Rule and Constitutions. Be humble and pray for me. Do not imagine I am in Heaven whilst perhaps I am suffering in the terrible fire of Purgatory. Hence, pray for me . . . pray for me, dear Sisters! . . .

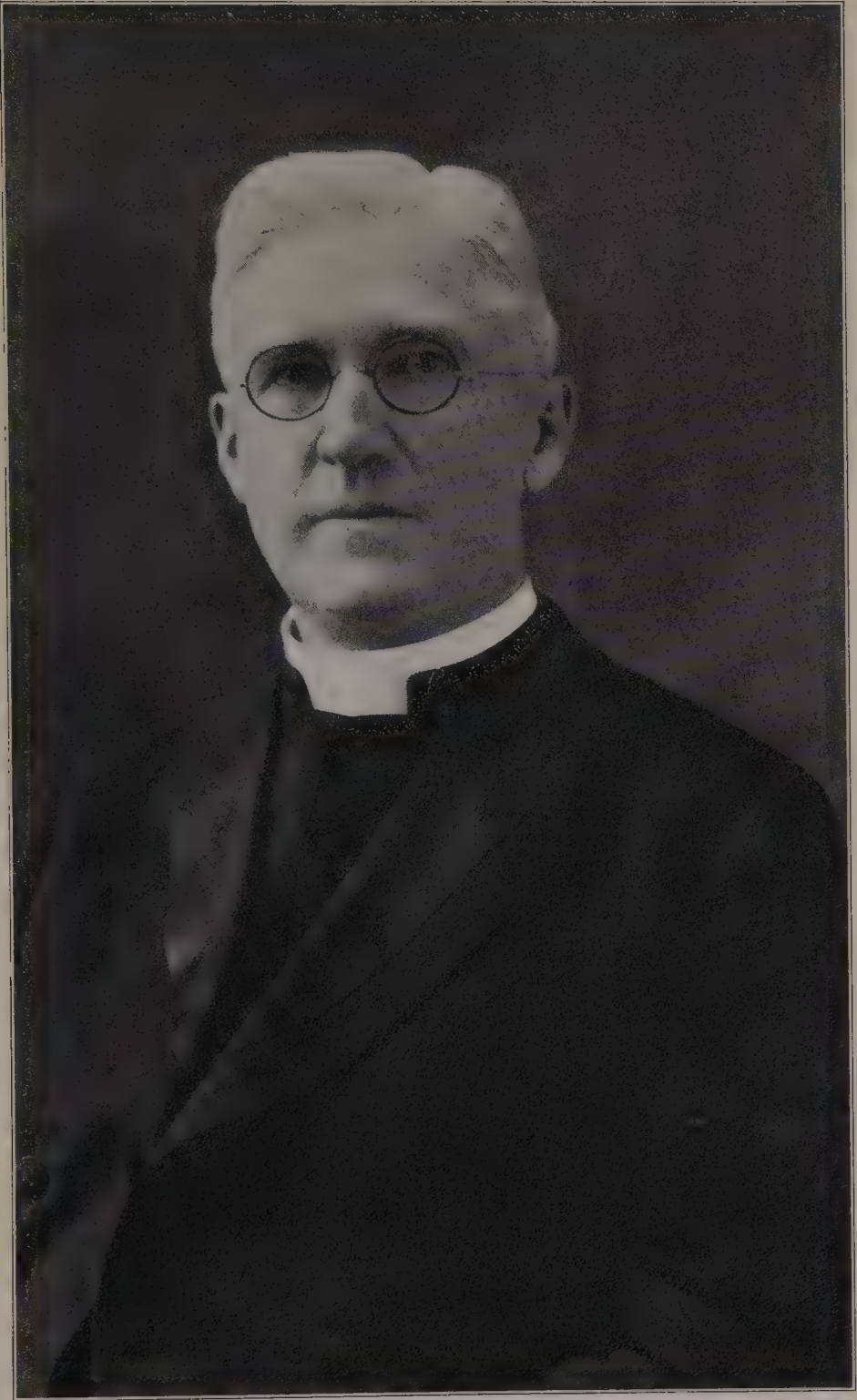
“Fear not. God has helped me. He will also help you. We shall always be close to one another; as long as you are good and dutiful, I shall be with you.”

When all hope for her life was despaired of, it seemed as if her strength which for so long had been the mainstay of her community, had passed on to her Sisters, for there was no loud grieving. Every heart-beat became a prayer for her.

A little after midnight previous to the day of her death, numbers of her Sisters quickly and silently gathered around her bedside where Holy Communion was brought to her for the last time. From the hands of the Right Reverend Michael James Gallagher, D.D., she received her Eucharistic King as Viaticum. Her last day on earth was to close on the threshold of Mary's month. The peace which seemed a foretaste of her happy Eternity descended upon her.

When the time for Holy Mass approached she designated by a sign her desire that the Sisters should leave her bedside to offer homage to God at the morning Sacrifice. Quickly they obeyed, and when Mass was over, they as quickly and anxiously returned to keep the last watch with their Mother.





THE LATE RIGHT REVEREND EDWARD DIONYSIUS KELLY, D.D.  
Bishop of Grand Rapids (1919-1926)





The Reverend Father Burns, C.Ss.R., (since gone to his eternal reward) came in and asked Mother what he could do for her. She wished to speak to him alone. After the Sisters again assembled, he asked Mother to give them her blessing. Slowly and impressively the feeble right hand was raised in benediction over the bowed heads of her grief-stricken Sisters.

She passed the morning calmly in prayer and meditation, and at three that afternoon, amidst the chant of the *Salve*, the Master called her Home. Joyfully her beautiful soul went forth, on the first day of our Lady's month, to join in seraphic hymns of praise to God, her Queen, and St. Dominic.

For our Congregation, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, that sorrowful Saturday might well have been a day of shadow and gloom, but remembering the command of Holy Faith: "as sorrowing yet always rejoicing" the Sisters throughout the diocese steeled themselves to do as Mother would have desired them to do—put their personal sorrow in the background, and go forth to follow faithfully the calls of duty.

For two days the blessed remains rested in the community room, while day and night the Sisters knelt in ceaseless prayer. On Monday morning the body of the beloved Superior was borne in procession, with the Sisters carrying lighted candles and chanting the *Libera*, to the heavily draped chapel—that chapel that Mother had loved so well, and in

which she had spent so many hours of vigil with her Master. Here friends and patrons of the Home, religious of different communities, bishops, priests, and many others came to pay a last tribute to the great soul who had done so much for them in life.

From five o'clock on Tuesday morning until eight, one Mass followed another. At eight, the Solemn Mass of Requiem was sung, the Right Reverend Bishop Richter pontificating. The good Bishop's grief at the loss of his saintly co-worker, was, indeed, deep. At the gospel, he arose and, in spite of his emotion, strove to express the great esteem he had for Mother Aquinata.

He told how, in the time of his greatest need, when priests were few in number and the harvest ripe for Catholic education with none to garner, Mother Aquinata, filled with Dominican zeal and intellectual prudence, had offered him her own whole-hearted service together with that of her Community. Briefly the Bishop reviewed the necessary steps that were taken towards the establishment of an authorized diocesan Community, enjoying all the privileges of an incorporated Dominican Congregation.

For the consolation of the bereaved members who mourned the loss of one who was their "Tower of Strength," as the Right Reverend Bishop Schrembs had fittingly remarked in his message of sympathy, His Lordship told the sorrowing Sisters that nothing had been left undone towards making that

Foundation a bulwark of the Community, solid and lasting.

Bishop Richter wished the Sisters to remember that the last official act of their dying Superior was to affix the title page to the Constitutions as they came from the printer's office, before receiving the approval of the Ordinary of the Diocese. In clear, distinct handwriting she inscribed:

"The Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in the Diocese of Grand Rapids."

Following the funeral Mass, the Right Reverend Michael Gallagher delivered a touching eulogy, dwelling upon the shining example she had been to her Sisters. Always an impressive speaker, Bishop Gallagher, on this occasion, moved by tender sympathy for the grieving community and by his personal friendship for Mother Aquinata, waxed eloquent. His exquisite tribute to the dead bore an inspiring message to the living.

When the burial service was ended and the last "*Requiescat in Pace*" was being sung, a thrill seemed to pass through the chapel as the Sisters realized that the hardest moment had arrived—when "Mother" would be taken from them forever.

In the cemetery Bishop Gallagher officiated. As the *Aves* of the Rosary were being repeated after the casket had been reverently lowered, they who had loved her best could not but rejoice that it had,

indeed, ended gloriously—that Golden Rosary of  
Years had held

“Achievements rare, which in our midst  
Stand out as monuments of sacrifice and love!”



## A GLIMPSE BEYOND

To look our last! For this they bade us gather  
     The newly stricken ones! Before us glowed  
 Our altar light—a beacon of the Father  
     Set to illume for us the opening road  
 Of orphanhood; its pain and weary yearning—  
     We knew them then, while in allotted place,  
 Through dimming eyes we looked upon our Mother  
     With lingered smile upon her placid face.  
 She lay—a-dream at last—at last resigning  
     The lifelong burden she had made her own!  
 Thy cares and mine, O Sisters! *she* had borne  
     Who rests them now, before the Great White Throne!  
 And we are bidden for the earthly parting  
     To say “Farewell!” How many breathed instead,  
 As I, upon that golden Maytime morning,  
     “Auf Wiedersehen!”—’Twas the farewell I said!  
 For straight before me, gloriously eclipsing  
     The green-grassed mound and its memorial cross,  
 I glimpsed the wonders of the Father’s Mansions  
     Where Christ hath promised *gain* for earthly *loss*!  
 I saw within those gleaming gates there waited  
     Our Father-Founder of the radiant brow,  
 His liliated hand extended for *her* welcome!  
     Ah! Dominic’s daughter stands acknowledged now!  
 And straightway with the choiring Angels guiding—  
     The mystiered ones that wait on Him alone—  
 He leads her gladly on where throned and sceptered  
     “Madonna del Rosario” greets her own!  
 Not streets of gold nor gates of porphry shining  
     Showed in my dreaming, for more meet it seems  
 That those who have renounced without repining  
     Should realize above, their vanished dreams!

With earth's aroma round them? Well, the Master  
     Walked Nazareth's quiet ways and found them fair,  
 Now in high Heaven He reads the myriad longings  
     Foresworn for Him on earth—He grants them there.  
*Her* young eyes loved a forest path outstretching—  
     Now such is set for her to tread today,  
 With blossoms of her Fatherland enwreathed—  
     Sweet wilding blooms to carpet all the way.  
 And overhead, not Seraphim a-winging—  
     But birds that twittered—butterflies that blew  
 Like floating star-beams through the lovely gloaming  
     Of some dear day her simple childhood knew.  
 Beyond—a trail by westerling sunbeams lighted  
     Where, soft as snowflakes, blent with shredded rose,  
 The apple blooms are drifting! She hath loved them  
     As emblem of this soil the Master chose  
 For her sojourn—Soil of Promise, surely.  
     Here hath she planted—here her faithful band  
 Followed to toil and travail—See! They wait her,  
     With palms of victory, in their Promised Land.  
 That laurelled Past is thine and theirs, Sweet Mother,  
     The Present ours we claimed; with thee beside  
 'Twas rife with promise—now thy blessed passing  
     Comes as the darkening shades of eventide.  
 But this we know—tho' drear the hours of watching,  
     Thy prayer shall speed the coming of the light—  
 This wouldst thou choose as guerdon from the Master  
     For the fair land thy labors "dotted white"  
 With Shrine and School and Cloister swiftly risen  
     To Dominic's dear ideals dedicate.  
 Their Future still thy charge, O wondrous Mother—  
     "Auf Wiedersehen!" We watch!  
                                 We pray!  
                                 We wait!

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARCHIVES, Motherhouse, Marywood, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- ARCHIVES, Holy Cross Convent, Ratisbon, Bavaria, Germany.
- ARCHIVES, St. Mary-on-the-Hudson, Newburgh, New York.
- ARCHIVES, St. Dominic Convent, Caldwell, New Jersey.
- CATHOLIC VIGIL, Official Organ of the Diocese of Grand Rapids,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1923-1925.
- SILVER JUBILEE BOOK, St. Francis Parish, Traverse City, Michigan,  
1898.
- SILVER JUBILEE BOOK, St. Alphonsus Parish, Grand Rapids,  
Michigan, 1923.
- BALLHAUS, E., Das schöne Eichsfeld.
- CATHOLIC EDITING COMPANY, Catholic Church in the United  
States of America, vol. 2, New York, 1914.
- DRANE, MOTHER THEODOSIA, History of St. Catherine of Siena.
- JORDAN OF SAXONY, O.P. BLESSED, Life of St. Dominic, translated  
by Father McEniry, O.P.
- LIPPOLD, GEORGE, Ein Naturdenkmal in Ohmgebirge.
- MINOGUE, A Hundred Years of Dominican History.
- MÜLLER, B., Führer durch Stadt und Kreis Worbis.
- O'DANIEL, O.P., REV. V. F., Life of the Right Reverend Edward  
Fenwick, O.P.
- SEEBOTH-HAUPTMANN, JOSEPH, Mein Eichsfeld (Heimat-Jahr-  
buch, 1925).
- SEVIER, CHRISTINE, From Ratisbon Cloisters, History of Holy Cross  
Convent, Brooklyn, New York, 1914.
- WILMS, O.P., P. HIERONYMUS, Geschichte der deutschen Dominikan-  
erinnen.



## INDEX





# INDEX

- ADELAIDE, O.P., 58, 61, 82.  
 Adrian, Michigan 41: hospital in 47;  
   54 St. Joseph Province 71.  
 Agatha, O.P., Sister, 58, 62.  
 Agnes of Tuscany, St., xxii.  
 Alacoque, O.P., Sister, 59.  
 Albertina, O.P., Sister, 40, 82.  
 Albertus, Magnus, Blessed, 13.  
 Alcantara, O.P., Sister, 47.  
 Alexia, O.P., Sister, 41, 47.  
 Aloysius, O.P., Sister, 55.  
 Alphonsa, Hawthorne, Mother, xix.  
 Alphonsus School, St., 59.  
 Alps, 2.  
 Alumnae, Girls Catholic Central, 103.  
 Alumnae, Sacred Heart Academy, 103.  
 Andrew School, St., 86.  
 Angela, O.P., Sister, 38, 64.  
 Aquinata Fiegler, O.P., Mother, xv;  
   birth of, 5; pupil, talents, etc., 7,  
   8; little mother, 9; 11; First Holy  
   Communion, 10; coming to America,  
   10, 11; vocation, 17; confessor, 18;  
   entrance into Novitiate, 20, 24;  
   Clothing, 20; name of, 21; Profession,  
   24; novice, 25; superior in Jersey  
   City, 25; executive ability of, 28,  
   30, 50; departure for Michigan, 31,  
   38; tributes to, 8, 32, 78, 94; vir-  
   tues of, 33, 43, 50, 89, 92; return  
   to Jersey City, 39; dedication of St.  
   Dominic's, 40; return to Traverse  
   City, 40, 41; love of prayer, 61, 89,  
   92; care of sick, 90; words of, 43,  
   55, 113; love of Blessed Sacrament,  
   43, 89, 92; opening of Bay City  
   houses, 44, 45, Saginaw 47; as edu-  
   cator, 49, 65; dedication of Holy  
   Angels, 51; Holy Angels, Provincial-  
   ate, 53; Retreat, 55; care of orphans,  
   57; opens St. Alphonsus, 59; power  
   of prayer, 61, 90; Silver Jubilee, 62;  
   dedication of purpose, 63; elected  
   Mother General to succeed Mother  
   Hyacinth, 63; delegation to Mich-  
   igan, 63; Prioress, 68; spiritual guide  
   of, 72; adopted Sinsinawa Constitu-  
   tions, 76; Mother General, 77; Old  
   Sacred Heart opened, 81; letter of,  
   84; as a mother, 94; et seq; Central  
   High School opened, 86; Golden  
   Jubilee, 86, 101; failing health, 107;  
   letter of, 109; return home, 109;  
   death, 115.  
 Athanasius, O.P., Sister, 41.  
 Augustine Fleck, O.P., Mother, xix.  
 Augustine Neuhierl, O.P., Mother, xix,  
   23; last days of, 25; last words and  
   prophecy, 26, 40, 87; death, 27.  
 Augustine, St., xv, 57.  
 BAPTISTA, O.P., Sister, 42.  
 Baraga, Rt. Rev., Frederick, Bishop of  
   Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette, 37.  
 Barbara, O.P., Sister, 42, 44.  
 Bardstown, Kentucky, 67.  
 Bauer, Rev. Joseph, 102.  
 Bay City, Michigan, 43, 44, 54.  
 Beatty, Penn., St. Vincent's Abbey, 14.  
 Benedicta, O.P., Mother, Third Mother  
   General, 82, 85, 98.  
 Benning, Rev. Father, 45.  
 Blanche, O.P., Mother, 42.  
 Blessed Sacrament, 43, 52, 54.  
 Blessed Virgin, devotion to, 10, 11, 21;  
   owed vocation to, 11, 35, 62, 115.  
 Bologna, xv.  
 Boniface, O.P., Mother, 9, 10, 21, 31,  
   38, 39, 88.  
 Boniface, St., missionary work of, 2;  
   legend of oak tree, 2, 3.  
 Boniface Church, St., Jersey City, 29;  
   parishioners of, 30.  
 Boniface School, St., Bay City, 43.  
 Borgess, Rt. Rev., Bishop of Detroit,  
   36, 68.  
 Borromeo, O.P., Sister, 38; death of,  
   44.  
 Borromeo, II, O.P., Sister, 82.  
 Bosslet, Sister Rose, 23.  
 Boys Catholic Central, Grand Rapids,

- Michigan, organized, 86, 87.  
 Brandstetter, C. Ss.R., Rev., confessor to Mother Aquinata, 18.  
 Bridgit of Sweden, St., xxii.  
 Brock, Mr. George A., 31.  
 Brooklyn, New York, 15, 16.  
 Buchmeier, Rev. Ambrose, 23.  
 Burns, C. Ss.R. Rev., 115.
- CALDWELL, Miss Ann, 47.  
 Camilla, O.P., Mother, xix, 38, 88.  
 Cantwell, C. Ss.R., Rev. Edward, 103.  
 Catherine of Alexandria, St., xxii.  
 Catherine of Bologna, St., xxii.  
 Catherine of Siena, St., xxii, xxiii, 58.  
 Catholic Central High School, organization of, 85.  
 Cecilia, Blessed, xvii.  
 Celestine, O.P., Blessed, 47.  
 Cherubina, O.P., Sister, 45; first vocation from Michigan, 53.  
 Cincinnati, 67, 68, 70.  
 Cistercians, 4; cloister of, 4.  
 Clancy, Mr. John, founder of St. John Home, 57.  
 Clementine, O.P., Mother, 27, 42.  
 Clara, O.P., Sister, 29.  
 Columbian Fair, xxi; Woman's Day, xxi.  
 Confirmation, Sacrament, first administered in Michigan, 36.  
 Constitutions, of Second Order, 73, 75; adoption of Sinsinawa, 76; new 111, et seq.  
 Coppens, S. J., Rev., 54.  
 Corrigan, Rt. Rev., Archbishop of New York, 64, 72.  
 Cyprian, O.P., Sister, 59, 62.
- DE SALES, O.P., Sister, 42, 58, 65.  
 Detroit, Michigan, diocese, 71.  
 Divine Office, recitation of, 32, 45, 76.  
 Dominic, St., habit of, xvi; founder, 14; vision of, 21; words of, 24; spirit of, 42, 43.  
 Dominic, O.P., Sister, 55.  
 Dominic, Convent of St., purchase of property, first convent, 29; new property, 30; building begun, 31; completed, 40.  
 Dominican Sisters, tribute to, 60.  
 Dominican Motto, 97.  
 Druids, 2.
- EDUCATION; Church and, 49, 60, 86.  
 Eichsfeld, valley of, 1; name of, 2, 3; pilgrimages, 11.  
 Elder, Rt. Rev., Bishop of Cincinnati, 68.  
 Eleanor, O.P., Sister, 47.  
 Emilia, O.P., Mother, 42.  
 Esser, O.P., Rev. Thomas, 77, 111.  
 Essexville, St. John, 79.  
 Eveline, O. P., Mother, Fourth Mother General, 95.
- FENWICK, O.P., Rt. Rev., Edward, 37.  
 Fiegler, Aloys, father of Mother Aquinata, 5; business of, 6; departure for America, 9; death, 12; father and daughter, 17, 19.  
 Fiegler, Appolonia, see Mother Aquinata.  
 Fiegler, Arnold, brother, 6; disposition, 7; leaving for America, 8, 9; service in Civil War, 11; death at sea, 11.  
 Fiegler, family of, 5; grandparents, 6, 9; hardships of, 10; departure for America, 9; return to Germany, 12.  
 Francis, Church of St., Traverse City, 36, 38, 39.
- GALLAGHER, Rt. Rev., Michael James, Bishop of Detroit, 69, 117; spiritual director, 98; teacher, 98, 102.  
 General Chapter, first, 77.  
 George, O.P., Sister, 45.  
 Girls Catholic Central, Grand Rapids, organized, 86, 103.  
 Glennon, Rt. Rev., Archbishop of St. Louis, 86.  
 Gonsalva, O.P., Mother, Second Mother General, 42.  
 Grand Rapids, 37, 57, 79, 103.  
 Gregory, Pope, conversion of German people, 2.  
 Gregory XVI., Pope, 37.
- HANNAH, Hon. Perry, 50.  
 Hartleb, Mrs. A., mother of Mother Boniface, 9.  
 Hartleb, Wilhelmena, see Mother Boniface.  
 Hartz Mountains, 1, 3.  
 Hieronyma, O.P., Sister, 43.  
 Henrietta, O.P., Sister, first to receive habit in Michigan, 53.

- Henry of Ortenburg, Count, 15.  
Hilton, Mr. Architect, 50.  
Holy Angels, Convent of, Traverse City, foundation, 38; new building, 50; dedication, 51.  
Holy Cross Convent, Brooklyn, foundation, 15; Mother Aquinata enters, 19; Novitiate, 20, 23.  
Holy Cross Convent, Ratisbon, xv; history of, 14, 20, 24.  
Holy Rosary Academy, Bay City, Michigan, 78.  
Holy Rosary Convent, Congregation of Holy Rosary, New York City, 23; struggles, 24; first superior sent from, 28, 36, 38; first band leaves, 31, 38; second band leaves, 40; Provincialate from, 53, 63; elects Mother Aquinata Mother General, 63.  
Holy Trinity, Church of, Brooklyn, 16.  
Hülfensberg, 3.  
Hyacinth, O.P., Mother Mary, xix; becomes Superior, 27, 36, 38; visit to Michigan, 44; death of, 64.  
ISABELLA, O.P., Sister, victim of diphtheria, 64.  
Iffland, Johanna Florentina; mother of Mother Aquinata, 5, 9; supporter of family, 9; visit to Traverse City, Michigan, 12; death, 12, 17.  
Ignatuis, O.P., Sister, 45, 58, 64.  
Iseke, Dr., poet of Eichsfeld, 3.  
Ita of Erin, St., xxii.  
JAMES, O.P., Sister, 47.  
Joan of Arc, 91.  
John Home, St., founded, 57; corner stone laid, 58; begging for, 60; epidemic of diphtheria, 64; 80, 102.  
Josepha, O.P., Sister Mary, 29.  
Joseph, O.P., Sister, 55.  
Joseph Province, St., Adrian, formed, 71.  
Joseph School, St., Bay City, Michigan, 44; opening of, 45.  
Joseph School, St., Saginaw, 47.  
Jubilee, Silver: St. Alphonsus Parish, Grand Rapids, 59; Mother Aquinata, O.P., 62; Golden: Mother M. Aquinata, O.P., 87.  
Justina, O.P., Sister, 47.  
KELLY, Rt. Rev. Edward D., Third Bishop of Grand Rapids, 85, 112.  
Kraus, Rev., 27, 30.  
LAKE Leelanau, Michigan, 79.  
Laugel, Rev. George, 94.  
Lawrence, O.P., Sister, 43.  
Le Fevre, Rt. Rev., Bishop of Detroit, 37.  
Leonarda, O.P., Sister, 45.  
Ligouri, O.P., Sister, first Novice Mistress, 43, 55.  
Loughlin, Rt. Rev., first Bishop of Brooklyn, 15, 16.  
Ludovica, O.P., Sister Mary, 41.  
McALLISTER, Rev. John J., 69, 103.  
McCloskey, Rt. Rev., Bishop of Louisville, Kentucky, 68.  
McGeough, Rev. C. Ss.R., 62.  
MAGDALENE, O.P., Sister, 44.  
Mannes, O.P., Sister, 45.  
Mary's Church, St., Muskegon, 41.  
Mary, St., Indiana, 83.  
Mary-on-the-Hudson, St., 42.  
Martha, O.P., Sister, 38.  
Marywood, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 76; purchase of property, 85.  
Meador, Rev., 41.  
Meagher, O.P., Very Rev. Raymond, Provincial, 103.  
Michael, O.P., Sister, 29.  
Michigan, University of, affiliation with, 83.  
Mountain of Help, 3.  
Mrak, Rt. Rev. Ignatius, Bishop of Marquette, 50.  
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, 79.  
Mt. St. Mary, Cincinnati, 68.  
Music, department, 83.  
Muskegon, Michigan, St. Mary's, 41; St. Joseph's, 46, 54.  
NEUENKIRCHEN, Oldenburg, 67.  
Newbergh, New York, 42.  
Nicholas, Church of St., New York, 23.  
O'DONNELL, Dr. Frank, 82.  
O'Donnel, C.S.C., Rev. Hugh, 82.  
Oldenburg, Germany, 67.

- Order of St. Dominic, 95, 96.  
 Orphans, care of, 57.  
 Our Lady of Sacred Heart, Congregation of, 2; formed, 68, 74; change in Constitutions, 74; affiliation with Rome, 75; name, 77, 115.
- PAGEANT, Jubilee, 103.  
 Paredes, Most Rev., Bonaventure de, letter of, 84.  
 Paschal, O.P., Sister, 53, 61.  
 Pashabatown, Michigan, 79.  
 Patrizzi, Cardinal, 67.  
 Penitential Sisters, 41.  
 People's School, 6, 14.  
 Petruina, O.P., Sister Mary, 27.  
 Philip, O.P., Sister Mary, 32.  
 Pia, O.P., Mother Mary, xix.  
 Pinten, D.D., Rt. Rev. Joseph G., present Bishop of Grand Rapids, 112.  
 Pontifical College, Rome, 67.  
 Port Austin, 41, et seq., 54.  
 Prophecy of Mother Augustine, 26, 36; fulfilled, 40, 41, 87.
- RAFFEINER, Vicar General of Brooklyn, 16.  
 Ratisbon, Bavaria, Catholicity of, 13.  
 Reception, 53, 55.  
 Redemptorist Fathers, New York City, 16, 18; Grand Rapids, Michigan, 59, 60.  
 Reese, Rt. Rev., first Bishop of Detroit, 37.  
 Retreat, preliminary to Clothing, 21; "Big", 54.  
 Richter, Rt. Rev. Henry Joseph, first Bishop of Grand Rapids, 37; first ceremony in new diocese, 51, 53; care of orphans, 57, 63, 64; biography, 67; ordination, 68; consecration, 68; teacher, 68; work of, 69; tributes, 69, et seq.; characteristics of, 70, 71; forms diocesan community, 72, 78, 80; organizes Catholic Central High School, 85, 102, 116.  
 Riedel, Rt. Rev., Bishop of Ratisbon, 15.  
 Rochoweki, Rev. Carimir, 47.  
 Rome, 67.  
 Rose of Lima, St. xxii.
- SABINA, O.P., Sister, 59.  
 Sacred Heart Academy, Old opening, 81, 86, 103.  
 Sacred Heart College and Academy, Marywood, Grand Rapids, 76, 85.  
 Saginaw, Michigan, 47, 54.  
 Schell, Sister Cunegunda, 23.  
 Schmitt, Rev. John A., 81.  
 Severding, Mr., 31.  
 Sisters of Charity, Cincinnati, 86; withdrawal from St. Andrews, 87.  
 Sister's School, Worbis, 7, 18.  
 Stella, O.P., Sister, 47.  
 Stricker, Miss, Teacher of Mother Aquinata, 71.  
 Sweeney, Rev. Richard, 47.  
 Sylvester, O.P., Sister, 82.
- THEISSLING, O.P., Most Rev., Master General, 76.  
 Theresa of Castle, St., xxii.  
 Theresa, O.P., Sister Mary, 29.  
 Thibodeau, Rev. M. U., 44.  
 Thomas of Aquin, St., xvii; titles of, xvii; hymns of, xviii; name given to Mother Aquinata, 21.  
 Thor, 2.  
 Thüringer Wald, 1, 3.  
 Traverse City, Michigan, 12, 36 et seq., 44, 50.  
 Trinity College, 82.  
 True Cross, relic of, 15.
- VAN PAMMEL, Rev., 41.  
 Van Rooy, O. Praem., Rev. R., 102.  
 Vincent's Abbey, St., 14.  
 Vogl, Rev. Joseph, J. Chaplain, 78, 93.
- WALBURGA, O.P., Sister, 42.  
 Wallace, Rev., 41.  
 White, Rt. Rev. Charles, Bishop of Spokane, 103.  
 Wimmer, P.S.B., Rev. Boniface, 14.  
 Worbis, Location of, population, political importance, schools, 4, 5.  
 Wright, 79.  
 Wyss, Rev. John G., 103.
- XAVIER, O.P., Sister Mary, death of, 27.
- ZIEGLER, Rev. George, 36, 38, 39, 50.











Date Due

[illegible]

L. B. Cat. No. 1137



HARYSGROVE COLLEGE LIBRARY  
Memoirs of Mother Mary Aquinata  
270.921F45K



3 1927 00114226 1

270.921

F45K Kildee, Sister Mary

Philomena.

Memoirs of Mother Mary

270.921

F45K



